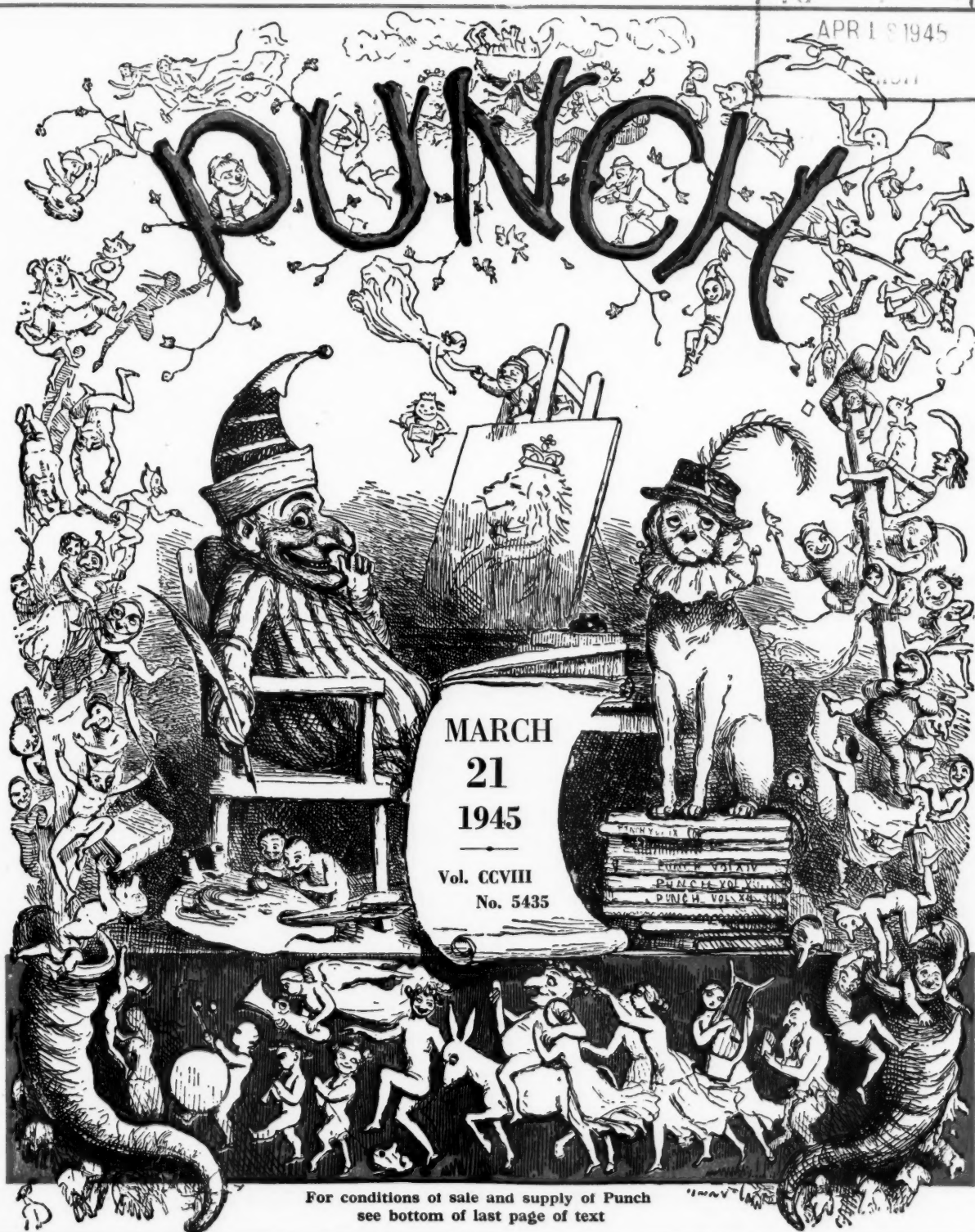


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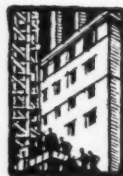


For conditions of sale and supply of Punch  
see bottom of last page of text



## Player's Please



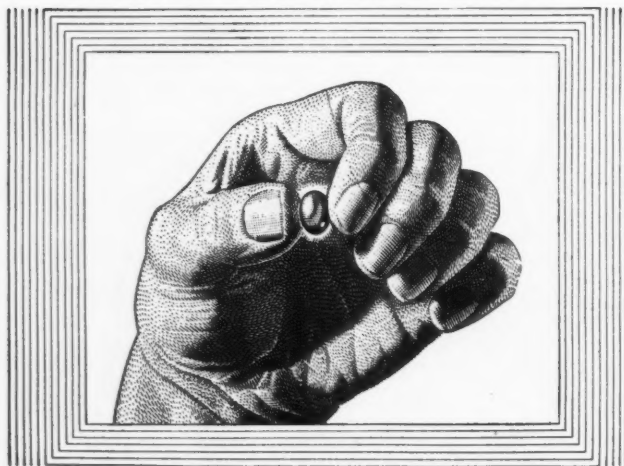


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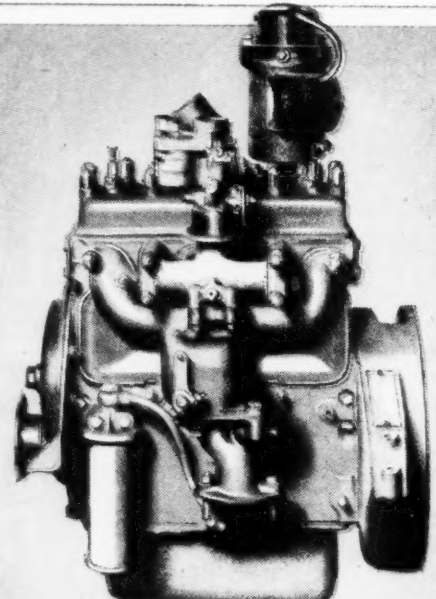


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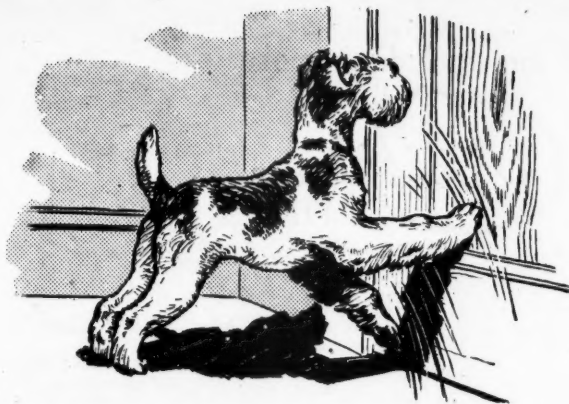
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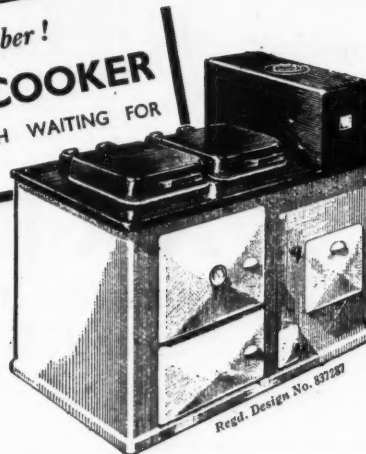
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*Force majeure*

The war has done many things to most of us. Those, for instance, who regularly looked forward to their Fortts BATH OLIVER Biscuits in peacetime may now find them not always easy to obtain. But it can't be helped! Wartime conditions *must* be met. If you have occasionally to go short, rest assured that you will be able to enjoy them again when the war is won.

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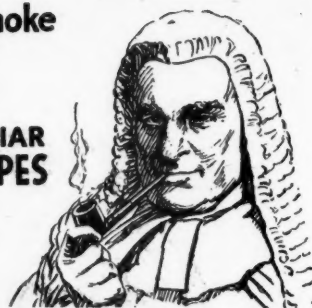
All shrewd Judges smoke

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The only sure way of saving your children from the peril of road accidents, and yourself from life-long regret, is to teach every youngster the rules of road-safety. It's especially important with children around five years of age.

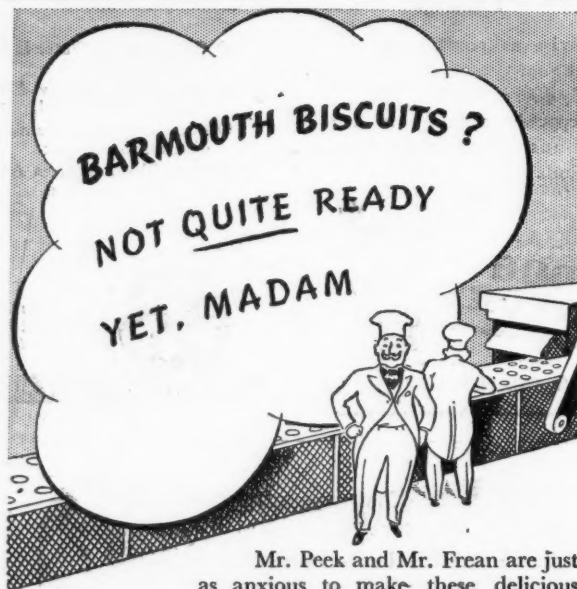
## What do I do...?

I give my children instructions in "kerb drill" regularly — and I keep at it until they follow these rules instinctively:

1. At the kerb, HALT.
2. Eyes right.
3. Eyes left.
4. Eyes right again. Then, IF THE ROAD IS CLEAR
5. Quick march.
6. Don't rush: cross in an orderly manner.

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Scotland's best Whisky

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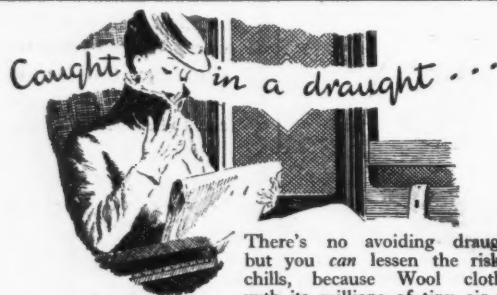
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President Roosevelt in his report  
to Congress on reverse Lend-Lease.  
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picture?

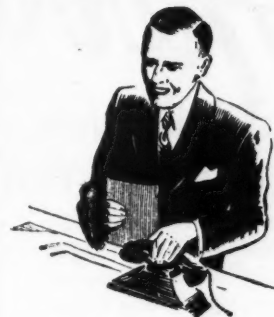


Give yourself full marks if you've discovered all these mistakes in less than 30 seconds. For a start, hasn't the mirror changed madam's outfit—and the position of powder box and puff? Where's the reflection of that vase of flowers in the mirror and where's the handle to the open dressing table drawer? Anything else wrong? Of course, she couldn't possibly have Caley FORTUNE chocolates these days. They can't be made now, not until Caley's have a factory again after the war. Caley Chocolate Blocks though are still available.

Today even Caley Chocolate blocks are made for us by good friends in the trade. Our thanks to them for their help until we can make FORTUNE and other Caley favourites for ourselves again.

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- No. 14—"Operation and Maintenance of Gas Burners."
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Always keep them handy in desk or pocket for reference.

The Bulletins issued by the Ministry of Fuel and Power provide the latest "specialist" knowledge on all aspects of fuel saving. They show how waste may be occurring in unexpected places, and tell what the cure is. Only when plant has been considered in the light of all the appropriate Bulletins can there be reasonable certainty that every source of wastage has been discovered.

**To Managements.** See that copies of these three Bulletins are circulated among your staff at once.

**To Staff.** Keep the Fuel Efficiency Bulletins ready to hand so you can be sure that no opportunity for fuel saving is being missed.

Additional copies of the Fuel Efficiency Bulletins and Fuel Watchers' Badges can be obtained from the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Fuel and Power.



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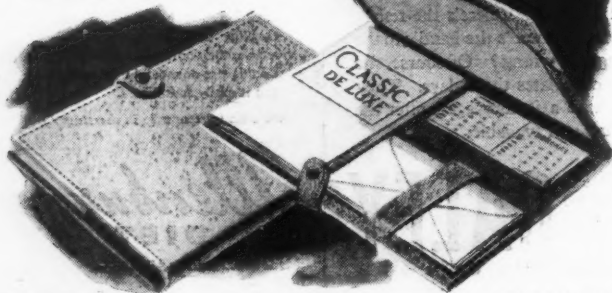
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Size 11½ x 8½ ins.

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Many of the Heinz Varieties that you could not get for so long have been on Service with the Forces. Here is a list of what they have had, and, knowing Heinz quality, you can judge what has been done to keep them "fighting fit":

### SELF-HEATING CANS

of Kidney Soup, Cream of Green Pea Soup, Mock Turtle Soup, Cream of Celery Soup, Oxtail Soup, Cream of Chicken Soup, Cocoa Milk, Malt Milk.

### DEHYDRATED VEGETABLES

Potato, Carrot, Cabbage.

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# HEINZ

57

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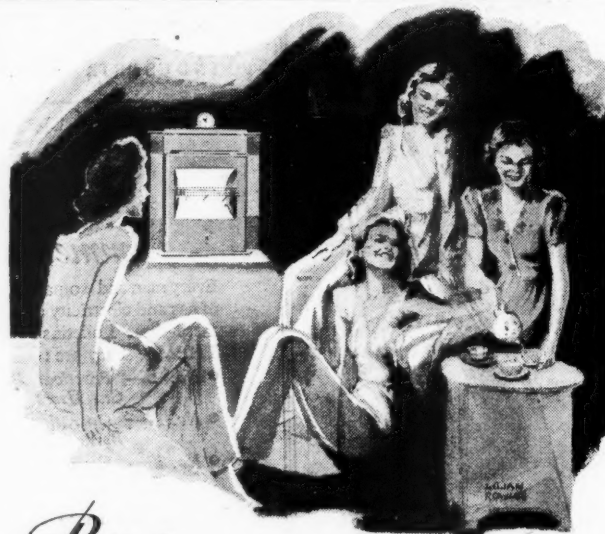


Signal Service! Your trusty Blue Gillettes are out of commission just now. It's not all smooth sailing yet. But there's smooth *shaving* to be had from the Standard Gillette Blade — the blade in battledress — with a heart of sound steel. All ship-shape and Gillette fashion!

## Gillette in battledress

"Standard" Gillette Blades (plain steel) 2d each, including Purchase Tax. Fit all Gillette razors, old or new.

Sometimes hard to find — but always worth the effort! Production still restricted.



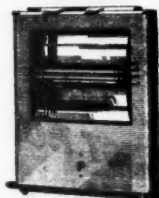
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# PUNCH

On

The London Charivari



Vol. CCVIII No. 5435

March 21 1945

## Charivaria

THE Germans on the Western Front are continuing their stubborn disintegration.

Goebbels and Ribbentrop are included in the official list of British war criminals. A pessimistic correspondent says he supposes they will quote this on the jackets of their volumes of war memoirs.



The fall of Berlin will mean the liquidation of the last outpost guarding the bastion of the approaches to the first defence line before the last ditch.

Some of our old lanes wander back through history, according to a broadcaster. The way it repeats itself on the signposts is most misleading.

### Total War Corner

"The chairman says the company has had perforce to operate on unusually low socks."—*Company report.*

Hitler threatens to leave only rats for the Allies in Germany. He will go down with the ship of state and desert them.

A Frinton correspondent suggests that Home Guards should get gratuities too. But there is a strong feeling that it would be wiser not to bother the Government for a bit in case they might ask for their boots back.

"The Balkan cauldron still seethes," says a report. But wait. Switzerland has now refused transit to German coal.

"'You've had it' was the title of the address to be given to the Club, but the speaker did not attend."—*Staffs paper.*

A very reasonable course to take.

The present war has now gone on so long that many of our retired generals who began it by fighting the last one may be on the point of entering it soon.

The brief burst of spring sunshine recently observed in London is thought to have been on its way outwards from the Ministry of Information.



A columnist says he has noticed an increased air of gaiety in London. It's possible that there are more people coming home with the extra milk.

A centenarian states that he started drinking beer when he was ten. Rather early, perhaps, but he may have had a premonition of what it would be like in ninety years' time.

Spring sales have begun, but few taxi-drivers seem to have bought any.





## The Traveller

IT was a sunny day. The almond blossom and forsythia were splendid. He was first in the queue. I was second. There were seven people behind us. I could see that he was the kind of man who would talk if any trouble came. It came. The bus swerved round a road-block and stopped at the tail-end of the queue. The seven people behind us got on. It was full to overflowing. We stayed.

"You wouldn't believe it," he said. "But that is the third time this has happened to me in three weeks."

An unlucky man, I thought.

"I wonder," I said, "you don't stand at the other end of the queue."

"Highly irregular," he said. "What ought to happen in such cases is that the queue should form six yards further down. I've written to the Board about it. I received no reply."

Another bus came. We got on that. It was full inside. We went up to the top. It was full on the top. We stood. The conductress came up the stairs.

"No standing on the top," she said. She was a beautiful girl. We went downstairs. We stood on the platform.

"No standing on the platform," she said. "Pass right down inside, please."

We passed.

The bus stopped. Two men came down from the top. We went back to the door. Two men got on the bus and went up the stairs. We passed again.

The man was angry. He is not, I reflected, steeled to adversity.

I have met many queer characters, good and bad. I have met a West End house-agent who repented of his crimes and became a respectable house-coper. But this fellow—

"Three days ago—" he began.

The bus went round a corner. He sat down very suddenly on a woman's lap. He was not hurt. She was that kind of woman. He got up.

"Three days ago," he went on, "I told a bus-conductress that as I was first inside the bus when the bus was full I had the first right to any vacant seat inside or outside. And do you know what she said to me?"

I admitted ignorance.

"She said, 'I haven't got time to argue. I've got my job to do.' And do you know what happened the day before that?"

He seemed to be a man who kept a diary.

"No," I said.

"The bus was quite full, platform and all. I was standing on the

platform. An inspector got on. 'Someone's got to get off,' he said. And he made me go."

One of nature's scapegoats, I surmised. I was beginning to grow weary of his sorrows.

"Did you write to the Board about that?" I said.

"I did. And there was no answer again."

He was clearly a man who did not realize that we were involved in a mighty war. The standing-room inside the bus was now quite full.

"And another thing," he said. "I was waiting, yesterday, at a 'Request Stop.' A bus pulled up that wasn't mine. My bus came up and sneaked round on the off side, in spite of my clear signals. Do you know what I did?"

"You wrote—" I hazarded.

"Wait a minute. I walked right into the road, in front of that other bus, and hit my bus with my umbrella as it passed. I made a long scratch on the side of it. Then I wrote to the Board and said, 'You will find one of your buses marked with the point of my umbrella. Let that be a lesson to the driver.'"

A petulant, I thought, but hardly a profitable deed.

"Aw feh, pliz," said the conductress.

He pulled a handful of pennies out of a trouser pocket.

"I always try to pay the exact fare," he explained.

The woman on whom he had recently sat rose to get out and jogged his elbow.

The floor of the bus was filled with a pleasant tinkling sound. Everybody groped on the floor and searched busily. They lifted their feet. They peered into grooves. They were filled with charity and the spirit of the chase.

"I had eight pennies in my hand," he said. We found seven.

"Aw right, duckie," said the conductress. "I'll get the other."

But he insisted on paying his fourpence.

He had a seat now. After a while, I got one too. I sat beside him.

"Why do they call one 'duckie'?" he complained.

"They don't always. It's sometimes 'dearie.' I think it depends on the time schedule."

It seemed to me that I had never met such a fussy man. What he needed was a courier. I thought it well to reason with him.

"It was much worse," I said, "during the blitz. Buses used to spin right round. There were holes in the road. The routes changed. Once we thought one of these new things was going to hit us. We all lay on the floor."

He did not seem comforted.

"I wasn't in London then," he said.

"In the country of course—"

"I was in hospital. After getting back."

"Getting back from where?"

"France. I was lost after Dunkirk. Hid up. Worked on the land. Got back. Was discharged."

I became inquisitive.

"How long were you in France?"

"Two years. Got to Barcelona. Over the Pyrenees. Was in prison for a time."

"It must have been rather difficult—"

"Had a compass. Couldn't go into towns or villages. Trouble was to dodge the Germans. Had pneumonia. Damaged a knee."

"Rather bad, wasn't it?"

"Oh, I dunno. People were very kind."

"Frankly," I said, "I don't see how you managed it. Did you go in hay-carts, or how?"

"Walked," he said. "Every step of it."

I had to get off then. As I stood up I noticed the missing penny on the floor. I gave it to him.

"Thanks," he said. "That puts me right."

A martinet, I said to myself in the street, if ever there was one. Strange how I can always sum up a man at a glance.

EVOE.

## Lament

THE clock-mender is gone, so this  
The burden of my song—  
Most of the clocks in our house  
don't strike,

And those that strike, strike wrong.

The clock-mender is a right good man,  
A right good man is he,  
But they have whisked the clock-  
mender

Away across the sea;

So this must still be, for a while,

The burden of my song—

Most of the clocks in our house don't  
strike,

And those that strike, strike wrong.

A. W. B.



### THE STRAGGLER

"I was never a Nazi at heart."



*"Well, I'm sorry you won't take us to the Bijou Theatre—is it because it's out of your way or just that you personally didn't care for the show?"*

## Much Ado

**Y**OU will notice," I said, "that the delineation of the character of Brutus is inferential. Shakespeare . . ."

There was a monosyllabic interruption from the back of the hall. This surprised me. In all my lectures to the Forces I have met with nothing but respect. I paused for a moment to mark my disapproval and recover my balance. Fortunately I still had my finger on my notes.

"Shakespeare . . ." I began.

"Bacon," said the interrupter.

I looked rather pointedly at the sergeant-major on the front row. He smiled sympathetically.

"Shakespeare . . ."

"Bacon."

I made four or five attempts to get going, but the lone heckler was persistent.

"Look here, old chap," I said, "I don't mind this cross-talk a bit, but it is rather pointless, don't you think?"

"Not at all," he said. "You are

misleading everybody. You've no right to be so dogmatic."

The rest of the audience seemed to be coming to life.

"How d'you mean," I said, "dogmatic?"

"Well, saying Shakespeare wrote them plays when 'e didn't. Bacon did."

I laughed.

"You don't really mean to say that you believe that stuff about Bacon?" I said.

"I certainly do," he said. "Only Bacon could 'ave written them plays."

"What makes you think that?"

"Well," he said, "how many plays d'you reckon Shakespeare wrote?"

At a moment such as this it is best to appear confident and knowledgeable. I replied immediately.

"Twenty-six—or twenty-seven, if you count *Hamlet* twice."

"Why twice?" he said.

"Well, if you remember," I said, "the first folio was accidentally burned by a servant-girl."

"That was Carlyle," he said. "Anyway it's thirty-seven. Now take the letters in the word Shakespeare—S-H-A-K-E, etc. There are three E's, two A's and two S's. That means three twos, two threes and" (he referred, here, to a page of his pocket-book)—"two seventeens. Now look at the other letters . . ."

By this time the men were really interested. They turned their chairs round so that they faced the speaker, who was now on his feet. I saw that he wore the stripes of a corporal. As he spoke I too came under his spell—or rather under the spell of numerology.

In five minutes or so I realized that Shakespeare could have written no more than eleven of the plays usually attributed to him; that he might have written 11, 61, 123 or 374 plays, but not 37.

The corporal sat down. But he was on his feet again immediately answering questions from all parts of the hall. He proved that one Joan Poulstone in



## Parade

Leeds was behaving with exemplary fidelity to her soldier swain, that Hitler would cease upon the midnight of March 27th, 1945, and that post-war credits would indeed be honoured. The corporal's mathematics were most convincing. I was inquisitive enough myself to ask a supplementary question about the Burnham Committee.

At length the discussion died away, the chairs were rearranged and the lecture was resumed.

"Bacon . . ." I began.

"Wait a mo'," said a private in the third row, looking up from his notes, "how many plays did you say this Shakespeare wrote?"

"Thirty-seven," I said.

"Well, it couldn't 'ave been Bacon, neither," he said.

This announcement caused great excitement. The corporal leapt to his feet with a challenge. But the private was masterful. Within three minutes he had shown that although Bacon could easily have written thirty-seven plays he could not have written the thirty-seven plays in question. *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*, for example, were titles inconsistent numerologically with Bacon. Their "values" were all wrong.

The position was now rapidly deteriorating. The men were clearly perplexed. Some of them were looking at me as if they thought that I had written the plays. It was very awkward.

One man struggled from a sea of figures to claim that the missing playwright was Plztiv or Pztvil. Fortunately, it was at this moment that I had a bright idea.

"Look," I said, "I believe I know where we have gone wrong. Shakespeare wrote his name in various ways—Shakesper, Shakespere, Shakspeare and Shaksper. Surely this fact explains our mistake. Let us get back to work.

"Shakespeare," I said, recovering my notes, "takes very great care to show us the two sides of Brutus's character. . . ."

As I looked up from my notes I saw forty heads bent low over their desks, pencils working feverishly. Hod.

o o

### Tall Story

"Four thousand miles above sea level, and surrounded by jungle-covered mountains rising to still greater heights . . ."

Words, paper.

o o

### Impending Apology

"One of the French girls was . . . a 20-year blonde, with unswept hair and a modish tricorne hat . . ."—*Evening paper.*

CAPTAIN SYMPSON has just passed through an experience that has aged him a good deal. We each have our Achilles' heel, and Sympton's is an inability to perform military drill with grace and exactitude. In the old days when he was Sapper Sympton he was responsible for the resignation of at least three drill-sergeants, and few who were on the passing-out parade of 86 Company in March '41 will readily forget his remarkable left-about-turn just as they passed the brigadier, which knocked the rifles out of the hands of three other participants and caused the O.C. Training to break a small blood-vessel.

In the Royal Engineers his drill became so notorious that in the end the whole corps conspired to keep him off the parade ground. Before any sort of ceremonial parade took place his platoon sergeant would detail him for a nice cosy job in the cook-house, and visiting generals, arriving in the mess, would sidle up to the Colonel and whisper quietly "I trust, my dear Colonel, that you have made suitable arrangements to keep Sympton off the parade ground this afternoon?"

When the Engineers unloaded him into the Pioneers he appeared once or twice on various parade grounds in charge of large bodies of Africans, with the result that one major was bowler-hatted and a second-in-command was transferred to Salvage. It is currently supposed that it was largely owing to the quality of his drill that Sympton was eventually posted to the Welfare Department, where it was erroneously supposed that he would be out of danger. The real fact is that in the modern Army nobody can ever be quite safe from drill.

"You must come and watch the rehearsal of our passing-out parade," said Colonel Snow, when Sympton and I were on a Welfare visit to Pioneer Corps Depot. "The N.C.O.'s Cadre for Africans passes out to-morrow and we are running through the performance this afternoon."

So we sat with the Colonel in comfortable chairs and watched a couple of hundred Africans doing foot-drill and arms-drill and Guard-Mounting. They were very good, but Sympton was inclined to be critical. When a man was one-hundredth of a second late in withdrawing his bolt he said "Tut, tut" in a very marked way, and then pointed out that another man's rifle

was half an inch from his foot as he stood at attention.

The only European on the parade was a lieutenant who had to take over the guard and inspect it. Sympton made no remark about his performance but he tried to look as if he thought he could have managed better himself.

Next day we were there to watch the real parade, with the adjoining chairs full of brigadiers and full colonels. There was a terrific sandstorm blowing across the parade ground, and the soldiers were only visible during temporary lulls. Suddenly Sympton felt a hand on his shoulder, and Colonel Snow whispered urgently:

"Lieutenant Blood, who was to take the guard-mounting, has been delayed by the storm. It's quite simple, and you saw it yesterday, so I want you to take his place."

Sympton tottered forward, automatically obeying orders as a soldier should, and the next moment his friends were horrified to see him marching towards the waiting guard. Personally I just closed my eyes. Certain doom, I was sure, awaited him, and I reckoned it could only be a matter of hours before he was Private Sympton.

When I opened my eyes again I found that the sandstorm had come up with renewed vigour. Sympton and the guard had disappeared as into a thick fog. He emerged five minutes later looking shaken but game, and asked permission to dismiss the guard. Five minutes later again he was sitting next to the brigadier and being congratulated.

"I seem to know your face," I heard the brigadier say to him. "Weren't you a drill instructor once in the Grenadiers?"

Those who know Sympton would like to know what happened behind that kindly veil of sand, but Sympton himself was unable to help us, though he said that he had a feeling something must have gone wrong, because in the end he remounted the old guard and dismissed the new guard, who were found late in the afternoon wandering about a few miles away in the desert.

o o

### Foreign Office

Algernon Fitz-Courtney Pease  
Speaks five languages with ease.  
I wonder if he is such a bore  
In the other four.

## Happy Ending

WHEN James looks unhappy his face sheds about thirty-nine years of soft living and loose thinking and he appears to be leaning out of an invisible bassinette in search of an out-of-reach rattle. He becomes infinitely pathetic.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing," he said.

"Well, you look as if you'd swallowed a razor-blade. Is it tinned crayfish or only war-weariness?"

"Neither." James gulped slightly. "If you must know, it's my vulture."

"It's your what?"

"My vulture."

I sat down on the edge of his desk and patted his shoulder.

"My dear fellow," I said. "Six years of war unhinge the strongest. Has the blood-pressure been read lately?"

"You don't understand. My vulture is exceedingly unwell. They don't seem to know exactly what's the matter. It sounds like pneumonia, but obviously in the case of a vulture it's not very easy—"

"James!" I cried sharply. "We are old friends. Let there be no beating about the bush. What are you talking about?"

"My vulture. The one I'm supporting."

"Is this a juggling turn?"

"No, a fact. At the Zoo. You see, I was there about a year ago strolling round and I'd watched the lions being fed and felt a bit exhausted by it so I sat down for a breather in one of those tin chairs that turn you into a waffle when you get up."

"I know," I said, as sympathetically as I could.

"I was facing that big cage that looks as if a millionaire had been in debt to his parrot, and doing my best to think of nothing in particular, when suddenly I had a terrific shock."

"A man asked you for tuppence for the chair?"

"Have you ever had strychnine injected into your astral body?" James asked.

"No."

"Nor sat on the live rail at Leicester Square?"

"Never."

"Well, it was just between the two. When I came round I found I was eye to eye with an enormous bird."

"It was probably just an elderly Fellow. Some do get like that."

"It was in the cage. Up on a great perch, staring through and through

me. Reading the secrets of my soul. The wisdom of the ages was in its eye."

"Very bizarre and unnerving, I should think."

"Curiously enough," said James, "it was neither. An immediate bond seemed to be forged between us. Do you know about vultures?"

"Not very choosy eaters, are they?"

"No, but what they're like?"

"Rather similar to the better class of undertaker, if I remember rightly, except for somewhat stouter under-carts."

"At first sight the face is like a boat-hook that's been pushed through a feather boa. On further examination there are seen to be panels at the side on which skilled leather-workers have tried out a number of experimental designs. Above the panels are the eyes. And they're pure psychic X-ray."

"It all sounds simply charming."

"William—that's my vulture—has a wonderful way of suddenly dropping his head about a foot and still staring at you, only sideways."

"That's an old House of Commons trick," I said thoughtlessly.

"If you're going to sneer I shan't go on," James muttered, and for a moment icing conditions prevailed.

"I'm awfully sorry, James," I said quickly. "Please."

"There's not much more to it, actually, except that I went straight away and signed up for his keep for the duration. Every leave since I've been to Regent's Park, and the moment he's spotted me he's done a slow roll into the corner of the cage and we've spent the day making little cooing noises at each other."

"You probably have the same wavelength," I suggested.

"I shouldn't be surprised."

"Nor should I. How bad is he?"

"They take a poor view. Vultures are very well made, but when they pack up they pack up good and proper."

"Mightn't it help if you went and made little cooing noises at him at opening time?"

"That's the whole point. They think it might just make the difference. But I haven't any leave left."

"Not even a forty-eight?"

"All burnt up. It looks as if poor William's had it."

"Well, there's always compassionate leave," I suggested. James gave me one of his old-fashioned glances.

"K.R.s say nothing about sick vultures," he said.

"You could always go to the Group

Captain and say 'Excuse me, sir, but my vulture is far from well.'"

"I suppose there's nothing to stop me reciting 'There are Fairies at the Bottom of my Garden' to him. Once."

"I quite see what you mean, James," I said, "but for all you know he may have a secret passion for birds of prey. I'm not sure I didn't see him brooding over *Our Feathered Friends* in the Mess the other day."

James stared glumly out of the window.

"It would be a V.C. job," he said.

"You're not altogether a coward,"

I said. "Are you not the man who wired a bloater, and a ripe one, to the Air Commodore's cylinder-head?"

"Yes. But—"

"And who ordered twenty-five tons of paving stones to be delivered to a certain A.V.M.?"

"Shh!" James exploded, peering anxiously behind him.

"Then go to it. Either William is worth it or he isn't."

"You really think there might be a chance?"

"Of course. Group Captains are very complex mechanisms. Some have hearts, as well as hats, of gold."

James ground his teeth noisily. Then he went very white. Then he went out quickly. A moment later his sergeant came in.

"Telegram for the Squadron-Leader, sir."

"I think I'd better open it for him, Caxton, in case."

"Very good, sir."

"Excellent news, Caxton. The Squadron-Leader's sick friend in London has laid an egg."

"I beg pardon, sir?"

"He is much the better for it."

"Yes, sir. Where is the Squadron-Leader, sir?"

"Just at the moment, Caxton, he is with the Group Captain." And it may have been unfeeling, but I laughed.

ERIC.

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### Enough, Enough!

"On the other hand, it has to be remembered that the Spaniards were sufficiently faithful enough to the name . . ."

Literary weekly.

o o

"REWARD—Lost, Sept. 21, . . . small PARCEL containing nightgown (husband's gift)."—Advt. in *Liverpool paper*.

All right, we didn't say anything!

## Description of an Old Bridge

(Among the essay subjects set in a recent Public School Scholarship Examination Paper (for Foundation Scholars only) was an invitation to "Write a description of an old bridge." It seems to be worth trying.)

**A**N old bridge is generally made of stone. It stands with its two ends on either side of a river which it crosses in a series of bounds or arches. A very old bridge may have fallen arches, but the particular old bridge I am thinking of is all right and can be crossed by people and carts provided their laden weight does not exceed 30 cwt.

An old bridge has a crinkled parapet, if that is what the thing is called. That is to say there are sort of angles in the parapet in which one can stand for the purpose of leaning over and looking down at fish. On a fine day there is nothing better than resting your elbows on a parapet and watching water endlessly slipping away over weeds. But you want to be alone for it. A companion will always go and look at the water on the other side of the bridge and this leads to an uncomfortable feeling that perhaps there may be a better fish on view over there, or even an old man drifting down in a boat. It is better to lean downstream than up. This is because it is pleasanter to watch water running away from you than towards you, and also because there is an element of surprise about the objects, such as ducks and old pieces of wood, that come out from under the bridge.

The water under the arches of an old bridge is very dark and deep and the weeds that cling to the piers wave about in an extremely sinister manner. On the other hand it is often possible to catch a glimpse of a white enamelled jug or old hip-bath lying timelessly there, so that the mind is relieved of a sense of terror and mystery by the impact of the familiar and commonplace. Men climbing alone in the Dolomites, who have been overwhelmed and driven to the verge of insanity by the awful solitude of the brooding peaks and *massifs*, say that they have found themselves restored to reason, in a somewhat similar way, by stumbling over an old skeleton or putting their hand unexpectedly, in some cleft in the rock, into a tin of golden syrup.

The water under a new bridge affords no such stimulating contrasts.

(We have now dealt with the old bridge and the waters under the bridge, and the only thing left to carry the essay on to that length which candidates for Foundation Scholarships may be expected to attain is the approach to the bridge.)

Unquestionably the best way to approach an old bridge is by way of the river, either in a boat with somebody else rowing, or better still, sloshing up stream in waders with a packet of sandwiches in one pocket and a flask of whisky in the other. At a distance the eye appreciates the noble lines of pier and arch, buttress and parapet, and the gentle contrast of grey stone against the bright green of the fields and the darker hues of the woodlands that clothe the swelling hills beyond. Nature is in holiday mood to-day and not a cloud mars the still perfection of the sunlit scene. A kingfisher darts by, turning and twisting in his flight like a rat. A flock of geese skims honking under the bridge as we approach, and now and again some thirsty cart-horse treading incautiously too near the bank falls with a gentle plop into the stream. Half a dozen otters, revelling in the

## DON'T TELEPHONE: WRITE INSTEAD

and especially in the case of—



and—



and—







"I shall be glad when my interest in football gets out of all proportion again."

unaccustomed warmth, flash past on some mysterious errand . . .

Over the parapet of the old bridge leans a small boy. He is offensive. He says nothing, but his whole attitude towards himself and our fishing is derisory. He is eating some enormous sweet and appears to be entirely unaware of the quiet beauty of the river scene or even of the delicate undertones and overtones of colour, the greens, the sepias and the purples, that wind and weather and the interplay of sun and shadow have combined to paint in on the grey old face of the bridge.

He is clearly not a suitable candidate for a Foundation Scholarship.

(This is not, so far, a very good description of an old bridge. It wouldn't do for an open scholarship. But by the time we have given a bit more zip to the ending it will do well enough for a Foundation.)

And so we say good-bye to the old bridge. Night comes swiftly to the valley. The old moon, older even than the bridge, paints silvery ripples where the water swirls and eddies through the dim-seen arches. Near the bank a darker shadow on the water shows where a hippopotamus, escaped from a neighbouring zoo, wallows at her ease among the clinging weeds. Far away in the woods a weasel chatters angrily. Then silence, save for the chuckle and murmur of the unresting stream.

The old bridge is asleep. . . .

H. F. E.

## Fraternization

"The Politics"

O H! Sergeant! why do you search so diligent my dwelling? Not I to have dictatorial documentaries in concealment.

I am so innocent as a sheep of not democratic attitude and I insist on you not in my house finding tell-tale evidences. I am one who I understand the politics, up to

the moment. Fourteen times have I listened to not German radio opinions and so understood many things.

Do not you comprehend us Germans, who we are just the same as you, Nordic in races, and should, therefore, both of our nations be eye to eye? Think how of you ruling the seas with us in conquer of the land, hand in hand, could we not be masters of many peoples?

Sergeant! why do you so grimly handle the wardrobe of my nephew, who he is only a youngling, the poor Adolf? It is true there are many uniforms, but boys do be boys, unhelpfully, remember!

Sergeant, do not behave inhumanitarianly. Remember, it is to us Germans, poor people, to whom us many evils have also been done by the Party. Curse the Party!

But are we not right in not wishing to be Bolsheviks, eh? Yourselves, surely you do not wish to see Liberals snatching over Buckingham Palace, do you? What if a Bolshevik were to be chosen for Chancellor in Commons? What then?

Sergeant, have opinions! Do not be so silent like those of no opinions. It is so unheartening! Do not kick at a down man, eh?

By the way, Sergeant, what of America helping itself to some of British Empire? What of that? We Germans, who we think often of British Empire, would not agree we would be of your opinion, there!

What, Sergeant? It is indeed a revolver? Oho, oho. It is only the personal weapon of my daughter, I suppose, who she wishes to defend herself in case of burgle!

Sergeant, why do you arrest me? Sergeant . . . Teufel!

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## H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

THE next Fragment is one of those things that happen when one's children are appointed editors of their School Magazine. Junissimus held this post at Laburnum College for Arts, Sciences and Civics, which a friend of ours ran to provide customers for a tailors and booksellers he owned. A good deal of the copy required was supplied by a syndicate which sent lists of recent Ordinations, Shipping News and details of Wills, etc., but some he had to provide for himself, and to prevent his disgracing the family by being ungrammatical in public I provided him with Drama, and B. Smith sent notes on Botany and what the seasons did to it. Fortunately the lad soon lost his position owing to a very full Law Report he published about the Headmaster.

### BOSUNS MATE IN EVERY PORT.

(The scene is a meeting of a Secret Society.)

CHIEF VAMPIRE. Are there any objections to these accounts?

X 22. I suggest that figures be substituted for letters, or alternatively that a key be provided on the back.

CHIEF VAMPIRE. Your mania for publicity is beginning to get the question asked whether you are really secret-minded.

THE GRINER. I have a feeling he's going to draw the Ace of Spades very soon.

THE MAN IN THE PEWTER MASK. I shouldn't be surprised if he found the black spot in his chop suey at the next banquet.

AN EMINENCE GRISE. The adjective I should apply to him is "evanescent."

X 22. I withdraw my suggestion.

## THE MERCHANT NAVY MEN

THEY know no ease, the Merchant Navy men,  
Not home, with the good day done,  
But the high gale and the steep sea,  
The searing of cold and of sun;  
Voyage end, and voyage begun.

They may not rest; they wait in the dusk, the dawn,  
The flash and the tearing of steel,  
The ice-wrap of the cold wave,  
The cinders of thirst in the throat  
And madness that sits in the boat.

They know no help, they see these things alone;  
No uniform, linking in pride,  
Nor the hard hand and the straight brace  
Of discipline holding upright,  
But their own soul in the night.

They claim no gain, the Merchant Navy men;  
A wage, and the lot of the sea,  
The job done, and their fair name,  
And peace at the end of their way.  
They give; must we not repay?

Punch Comforts Fund, 10 Bouverie Street, E.C.4

Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940

CHIEF VAMPIRE. The accounts are passed. We now come to a request for affiliation from the West Bromwich "Friends of the Charnel House." I remember I opened their new headquarters last year.

THE GRINNER. Cuisine?

CHIEF VAMPIRE. We stood about holding boiled potatoes on little sticks.

THE RED MAJOR. Those in favour will be dealt with in the usual way.

CHIEF VAMPIRE. That concludes private business. Now we'll have a spot of ritual:

Blench, tyrants, blench.  
Double, double, toil and trouble.  
Three cheers for Beelzebub.

THE HOODED HORROR. I protest. Every time anyone spills salt it gets inside my hood.

THE GRINNER. What is it, by the way?

THE HOODED HORROR. Mus. Bac. with hockey colours.

CHIEF VAMPIRE. It's perfectly good salt. Some people called Glauber make it.

X 22. How is the Human Sacrifice Fund?

CHIEF VAMPIRE. It's coming along, but we shan't be able to afford one just yet. We shall have to stick to the usual Humorous Monologue to-night. Now, who is it going to be?

THE HOODED HORROR. I've got one about a Lincolnshire farmer teaching his little grand-daughter to say good-night to the ducks. It gives me a chance to quack a good deal as a change from dialect.

[Suddenly a screen falls over and a SPY is discovered behind it. He is elaborately seized.

THE RED MAJOR. Tar and feather him!

THE GRINNER. Let's hiss him.

CHIEF VAMPIRE. Tell us all about yourself.

SPY. My lips are sealed.

THE RED MAJOR. Damned awkward. How did it happen?

SPY. However, I am permitted to converse on general topics. Whilom . . .

THE GRINNER. Isn't there any penalty in the Rules for this kind of thing?

CHIEF VAMPIRE. I think that under Section 86a he can be held up to obloquy, but under Section 104 he must be certified as medically fit.

THE RED MAJOR. And we have to pay the fee.

X 22. That would mean another Whist Drive. I should have got the prize last time if they hadn't left the Joker in the pack; it put out all my calculations.

SPY. When I was with the Mafia . . .

CHIEF VAMPIRE. Oh, really, I am so sorry. I am afraid you must regard us as very provincial. As a Distinguished Visitor you must become an Honorary Member.

THE HOODED HORROR (suddenly). Coom, Fatima, my purty flah . . .

THE MAN IN THE PEWTER MASK. Oh, for the wings of a dove.

CHIEF VAMPIRE. Gentlemen, gentlemen. An appreciation of one another's efforts is surely *de rigueur* among chums.

Enter a POLICE CONSTABLE

POLICE CONSTABLE. Sorry to interrupt. Just a little matter of a warning. You have neglected to register under the Secret Societies Registration Act, and unless you repair the omission forthwith proceedings will be instituted.

CHIEF VAMPIRE. Purely an oversight, I assure you. I am afraid it's all due to our not having a secretary.

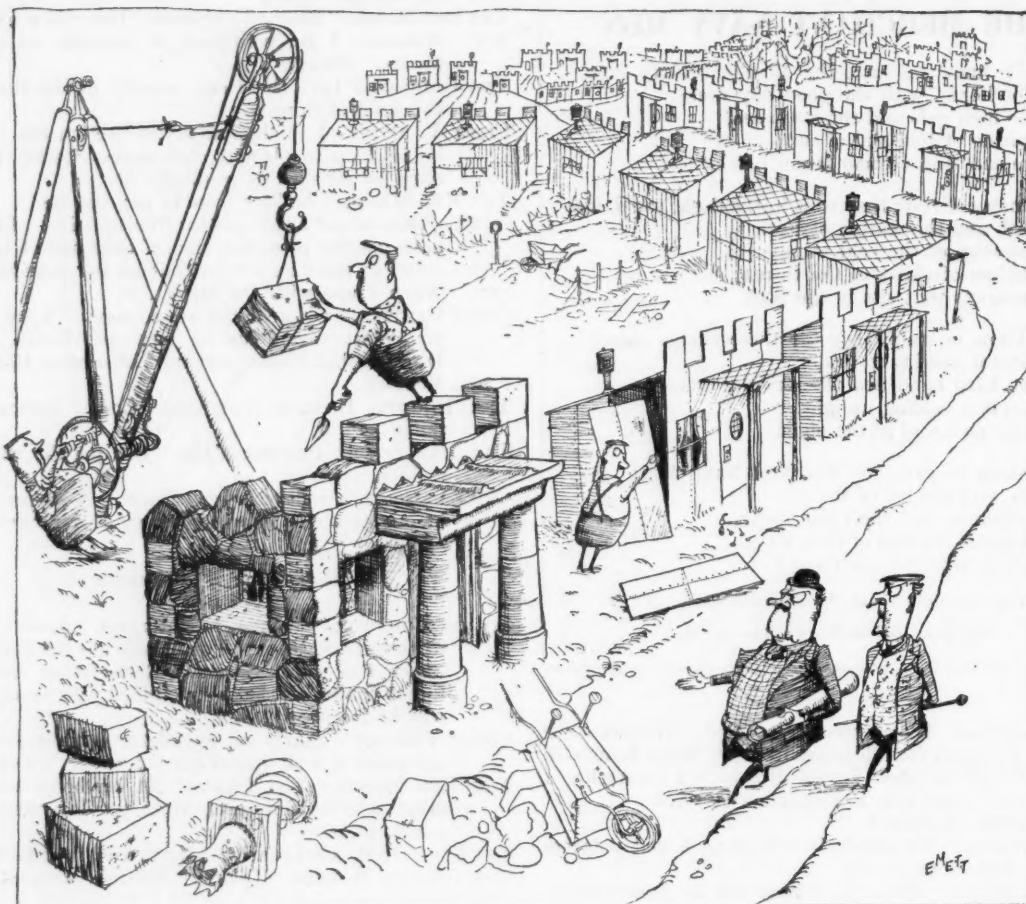
THE RED MAJOR. You'll never get anybody to write minutes in invisible ink. Once you lose your place you're done.

THE SPY. In the Carbonari we always used invisible blood.

THE HOODED HORROR. Quarck! Quarck! Quarck!

FINIS





"... and HERE, if you please, is where the Ministry changed its mind and said 'permanent'!"

### Cheek

[*"A film director is said to have arrived in Britain to 'glamourize' the British girl."*—*Press.*]

FROM Hollywood the message flies  
Of one about to come  
With the intent to "glamourize"  
The British girl, by gum—  
A word the narrow pedant bars,  
But one I take to mean  
The lure of those synthetic stars  
That glitter on the screen.

From Beachy Head to Groats's John  
He'll search in every part  
For raw material whereon  
To exercise his art;  
From rural parishes alike  
With urban neighbourhoods  
He'll draw whate'er appears to strike  
His fancy as the goods.

And shall we see on every hand  
Such doing of the hair  
As never was on sea or land,  
Round an unfaltering stare  
Huge two-inch lashes own the glue,  
Each tooth, a flawless pearl,  
Glow whitely in that standard moue  
Which marks the pin-up girl?

Girls will be girls, and oft are mad,  
And he, one fears, may seek  
Not vainly, though I'm bound to add  
It's like his blooming cheek;  
But here I firmly draw the line:  
Should he by chance propose  
To tinker with that girl of mine  
I'll strike him on the nose.

DUM-DUM.





THE FLYING NURSEMAID

## Impressions of Parliament

### Business Done

**Tuesday, March 13th.**—House of Commons: The Army!

**Wednesday, March 14th.**—House of Commons: Breeze!

**Thursday, March 15th.**—House of Commons: Nothing!

**Tuesday, March 13th.**—Now and then an actor or an actress gives a "one-man (or woman) show" in which the whole thing is concentrated on the star, and in which there are constant changes of dress and scenes and character. Not often it happens in Parliament, though. But to-day Sir JAMES GRIGG, the Secretary of State for War, tried the technique—and made a good thing of it.

First he came on as a Gangster (or Pirate, according to period) with a proposal "to move Mr. Speaker out of the Chair" so that the Army Estimates might be debated.

Attentive readers of these Impressions will know that this procedure is less horrific than it sounds, and consists merely of a polite request to the Speaker to go, which he invariably does.

But it sounded extremely terrifying. Then, with the usual request for a "few moments to change," Sir JAMES gave what the profession calls a "slight impression" of a War Lord. He need not have been so modest, for the story he was able to tell of the achievements and exploits of the British Army would have made anybody proud.

Sir JAMES—as many an M.P. will testify—is a blunt man who calls a tank a tank (occasionally adding further detailed description of a rather more startling kind), and the House gave him a warm cheer when he had told his tale. His performance was all the more remarkable since his voice was failing, owing to a severe chill. As soon as he had finished he leaped into the wings and came back a moment later in the character of an earnest note-taker, complete with vast sheets of paper, and quite a convincing air of *wanting* to listen to the speeches that followed.

Incidentally, as a curtain-raiser, before he got down to his speech at all, Sir JAMES had answered a seemingly endless series of questions, and in this his rôle was the somewhat unaccustomed one of light comedian. Your scribe is bound to say he went over big in this daring piece of casting.

His double act with Miss IRENE WARD was—if another technical

expression may be permitted—a riot. Miss WARD asked a question about an Army doctor, to receive the highly unusual reply: "*That's the idea!*"

Then some other Member asked a question. Answer: "*That's a new one on me!*"

By now everybody was prepared for anything, but the question-hour and the debate went very much according to plan, with people raising the "grievances" for which the discussion of Estimates was specially designed.

In a lull in the grievance parade Major ARTHUR HENDERSON, Financial Secretary to the War Office, stepped genially into the breach with a statement about demobilization which got

and woman will get a railway ticket, some food, some clothes and a lot of happiness and friendly help. Major HENDERSON had to take a couple of curtain calls at the end of his act.

And then the debate drifted on some more, on and on till past midnight. It was the first time the House had met at the new time of 2.15 p.m., and only fifty-five saw it through. It is only fair to say that the staff and police (who find it less easy to slip away) were even less enthusiastic about the change. Many of them had to walk home, or shake down on the floor.

**STOP PRESS:** At four minutes to midnight Sir JAMES said he would make only a short speech, lest it kept the House "until to-morrow morning." Major HENDERSON alertly pointed out that that event was but a few moments distant. The War Minister then grew dramatic and, in a vigorous exchange (on tanks, needless to say) with Mr. RICHARD STOKES, suddenly whisked out what seemed to be a white flag. But it turned out that it was merely another "slight impression"—of Mr. STOKES melodramatically pulling secret papers out of his pocket.

Then with an abrupt switch to "serious vein," Sir JAMES uttered these sincere and loudly applauded curtain lines: "I shall be proud all my life of having been associated with this British Army!"

**Wednesday, March 14th.**—Mr. CHURCHILL arrived at the House to-day obviously with what the police call "intent." He had an armful of typed papers, which he proceeded to plough through as he waited for questions to end. Then he caused a stir of interest by asking leave to make a "personal explanation." Such luxuries are all right for Back-benchers, and it is rare indeed that a Prime Minister indulges.

But this time Mr. CHURCHILL was clearly annoyed, and with grimly-set jaw he complained that Mr. STOKES, in the course of a speech overnight, had said that he (Mr. CHURCHILL) and Mr. OLIVER LYTTLETON, the Minister of Production, had "lied." The remark had not been heard by Mr. Speaker, who did not, therefore, call Mr. STOKES to order for using un-Parliamentary language. Mr. CHURCHILL, however, asked that Mr. STOKES should repeat the word (this time loud and clear) so that Mr. Speaker might hear and, presumably, rebuke.

But in vain is the snare set in the sight of so wily a bird as Mr. "DICK" STOKES, and he got up and said at once (like the sportsman he is) that, in order not to affront the Speaker, he



THE FLOWER OF MODESTY

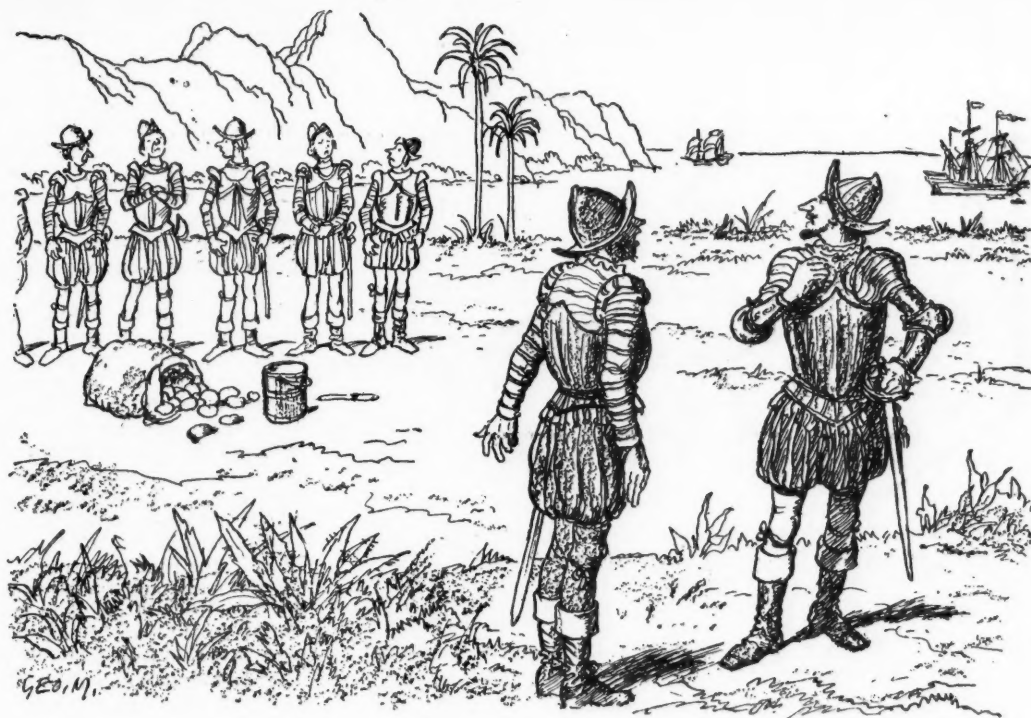
"I should like to thank him very much for his tribute to the Army. . . . Until the end of the German war the full story . . . cannot be told."

Sir James Grigg.

terrific cheers, because, clearly, in the spring (of 1945) a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of civvies.

With that clarity and precision which make him one of the most popular Ministers, Major HENDERSON explained that arrangements were being made to ensure that men and women leaving the Army were not at an undue disadvantage in re-entering civil life. The whole country will be divided into dispersal areas, and those few, those happy few, that band of brothers (and sisters) who are en route for civvy street, will pass through the areas, getting their release in fifteen minutes.

Anyway, it is all going to be very swift and smooth, and every man



"I've done my best, Sir Walter, but not one single man will volunteer to peel them."

would substitute the words "*Terminological inexactitude*."

This, it was generally agreed, was rather neat, the original author of that circumlocution having been—Mr. CHURCHILL. But this time it would not do, and Mr. Speaker pressed that "lie" and all its derivatives should be withdrawn. Mr. STOKES tried "*deceive*"—but that wouldn't do either. "What about '*mislead*'?" inquired Mr. STOKES, only to have it rejected as a synonym—or, rather, because it *was* one.

In the end Mr. STOKES did withdraw the word "lie" and Mr. CHURCHILL went on his way, presumably rejoicing.

Then there was much talk on income-tax reliefs for industry.

*Thursday, March 15th.*—The Conservative side of the House of Commons marched in in a body from the Central Hall, Westminster, where they had been listening to a speech by Mr. CHURCHILL. The proceedings at the conference were more exciting than the proceedings of the House.

In fact, but for the announcement of Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, as Leader of the House, that there is to be, next week, a two-days' debate on housing, the day was a *dies non*.

### Mr. Pope Visits the Bookshop.

... Such trifling done, I seek the busy mart,  
The rendez-vous of Fame, the home of Art;  
But lo! in vain the roving Optick delves  
Amid the Treasure of the barren shelves;  
From all alike is fled the Classick Wit,  
The sport of Paper—or the lack of It.  
Ev'n thou, Arbuthnot, canst but bear away,  
If aught, the transient Patter of a Day.  
Seek out a Book whose worth the Years resound,  
It never is, but always to be, bound;  
Demand another, that hath Wisdom in't,  
The answer is, The Book is out of print.  
Yet rear'd with Plenty from a secret Store  
Th' ephemeral Tribe but multiply the more.  
A hundred Booklets bid me recognize  
The fiery Wings that take the martial Skies;  
Here some, by Magick of th' auspicious Star,  
Foretell with wishful Thought the end of War;  
In fifty Pages see another scan  
Thro' rolling Time the Destiny of Man;  
Where *Shakespeare* stood secure, behold a Book  
To teach me how to garden, or to cook!  
And here, for awful *Milton's* mighty Line,  
A flimsy Pamphlet tells me how to dine;  
Thy savage anger, *Swift*, forgoes its Power  
For these brief Trifles of a fleeting Hour;  
Nor can thy Fame, O *Dryden*, count so much  
As yon grave Treatise on a Rabbit Hutch. . . .





"I left baby at home to-day—he throws it out."

## Not So Silly

A Child's Guide to Parliament—XIV

**N**OW, Rich-ard and I-vy, I think we are re-al-ly go-ing to make an end. You have both been ver-y good chil-dren—ex-cept for Rich-ard's re-pul-sive chew-ing, where do you get the stuff?—and I tell you what I am go-ing to do. I am go-ing to get you made Ass-o-ci-ates of the Han-sard So-ci-et-y, and I am go-ing to pay for a cop-y of *Han-sard* to be sent to you ev-er-y day that Par-li-a-ment sits.

What is *Han-sard*, I-vy, dear? *Han-sard* is the Off-i-cial Re-port of the Pro-ceed-ings of Par-li-a-ment, and the Han-sard So-ci-et-y\* ex-ists to spread the light con-cern-ing those pro-ceed-ings.

It is not the fault of the news-pa-pers, who are short of pa-per and space, now-a-days, and some-times are hard press-ed to do just-ice to a good mur-der; but their re-ports of our pro-ceed-ings are oft-en in-ad-e-quate and ev-en mis-lead-ing. Ev-en those which make a re-al eff-ort can-not find space for more than a frac-tion of what is said, and summ-ar-ies and ex-tracts, how-ev-er skil-ful-ly made, may give a wrong im-press-ion. Man-y a long, well-thought-out, int-er-est-ing and eff-ec-tive speech, esp-e-cial-ly if it is made late in the sitt-ing, can get no more no-tice than "Mis-ter Bott-le al-so

spoke." But an-y brief re-mark that is ver-y laugh-a-ble or ex-cep-tion-al-ly sill-y nat-ur-al-ly at-tracts att-en-tion and tends to be re-port-ed, so it is not sur-pris-ing that to read-ers of the more pop-u-lar pa-pers the House of Comm-ons some-times sounds like a cross be-tween Hand-ley and Han-well—I mean, I-vy dear, be-tween ra-ving lu-na-cy and con-gen-i-tal buff-oon-er-y.

But in *Han-sard* ev-er-y word that ev-ery-bod-y speaks is print-ed—and print-ed in the first per-son. This was not al-ways so. In fact, the Re-ports in their pres-ent form did not be-gin till 1909. In the old days, queer-ly en-ough, Par-li-a-ment did not like to have its pro-ceed-ings full-y re-port-ed; chief-ly, I think, be-cause it was some-times in-con-ven-i-ent for Min-is-ters to be re-mind-ed of their un-der-tak-ings and pro-nounce-ments. But now it is quite the oth-er way. It is thought, and right-ly, that the more the peo-ple know a-bout the place the more they will re-spect it. Man-y cit-iz-ens, aft-er read-ing *Han-sard* for the first time, have con-fess-ed they were as-ton-ish-ed to find that there were so man-y sane Mem-bers and that so man-y sens-i-ble and int-er-est-ing things were said.

A-part from that, it is, tech-ni-cal-ly, a ver-y re-mark-a-ble pro-duc-tion. On an ord-in-ar-y Par-li-a-men-tar-y day a-bout fift-y thous-and words will

be spo-ken, not count-ing Ques-tions: and in-clud-ing Ques-tions, the day's Re-port will cov-er a-bout a hun-dred pa-ges. Now, these words are not calm-ly dic-ta-ted in a stud-y to a sec-re-tar-y. The re-port-er is up in the Gall-ery and the speak-ers are far a-way on the floor of the House. Some of them speak ver-y fast, some have not good voic-es, some turn their backs up-on the Gall-ery in the mid-dle of a sent-ence, some do not fin-ish their sent-enc-es prop-er-ly and use biz-arre gramm-at-i-cal con-struc-tions, some make quo-ta-tions from doc-u-ments which are diff-i-cult to catch but must be corr-ect-ly re-cord-ed; some are ev-en so lost to de-cen-c-y as to use a Lat-in tag. Then there are in-terr-up-tions and in-ter-jec-tions, some-times more than one at a time; points of ord-er are rais-ed and the Speak-er gives a rul-ing, not ver-y loud-ly. If a speak-er vague-ly re-fers to "my hon-our-a-ble Friend" the poor re-port-er must find out the name and con-sti-tu-en-cy of the Mem-ber and put it in brack-ets, and he must i-den-ti-fy an-y-one who pops in an in-ter-jec-tion if he can. Al-to-gether it is no en-vi-a-ble job to make out what was said and get it all down.

When the re-port-ers can-not hear what is said clear-ly they in-vite the Mem-ber to go up and corr-ect their type-writ-t-en re-port be-fore it goes to the print-ers, and he re-al-iz-es what a jig-saw of a job they have. A speak-er may not, when so in-vi-ted, im-prove up-on what he act-u-al-ly said, ex-cept in points of gramm-ar and so on. He may, if he feels in-clin-ed, weld a split in-fin-i-tive or bring back to earth a *nom-in-a-ti-vus pen-dens*—What is that, I-vy dear? I am sorr-y, but it is too com-pli-ca-ted to ex-plain now. I with-draw the ex-press-ion—But, as I was say-ing, he may not in-sert the brill-i-ant witt-i-cism which, in fact, he for-got to utt-er; nor may he ex-punge the nu-mer-ous and un-ex-pect-ed err-ors of tact or taste or judg-ment which he made. So that the bus-i-ness of corr-ect-ing a speech just made in the Off-i-cial Re-port-ers' room is not a happ-y one. All the poor Mem-ber can do is to make his *faux pas* fair-ly gramm-at-i-cal.

But in spite of all these trou-bles and diff-i-cul-ties to-day's Re-port, a litt-le book in a pa-per cov-er, is all read-y ear-ly next morn-ing. In the old days of peace your Un-cle Hadd-ock would leave the House at half-past-el-ev-en or twelve and tott-er home to Hamm-er-smith and there on his break-fast ta-ble next morn-ing would be the full re-port of the day's

\* Secretary, 804 Hood, Dolphin Square, London, S.W.1.

pro-ceed-ings, in-clud-ing some-times the last speech he heard de-liv-er-ed. How it was done, and how it got there, he has no i-de-a. There must, he thinks, be some sort of fair-y att-ach-ed to the House of Comm-ons.

Well, read your *Han-sard*, Rich-ard and I-vy; for if you do, I think you will feel more kind-ly to-wards the "talk-ing-shop" and the loath-ly pol-i-ti-cians than you did be-fore. We are a ver-y hu-man ass-em-bly. Cho-sen by the cit-i-zens all ov-er the U-nit-ed King-dom, how could we be an-y-thing else? I wish I could take you to the fa-mous Smo-king Room, which is per-haps the most im-port-ant room in the build-ing—per-haps in the Em-pire; and you would see how hu-man we are.

Man-y high-mind-ed jests are made a-bout this room, a-bout the Mem-bers sitt-ing smo-king and drink-ing there when they ought to be in the Cham-ber, and so on. This is re-al-ly the most in-fan-tile non-sense, chil-dren. I have al-read-y ex-plain-ed that there is not the small-est reas-on why all the Mem-bers should be in the Cham-ber while the Breed-ing of Bees Bill is be-ing dis-cuss-ed. Those who know and care a-bout bees will be there; and that is en-ough. Oth-er and great-er matt-ers are brew-ing; and more things brew in the Smo-king Room than an-y-where else. If you could peep in and see the an-i-ma-ted crowd one ev-en-ing when the Room is full, you might think "This is just a pleas-ure part-y, such as you might see in an-y club." But you would be wrong. If you could mir-ac-u-lous-ly hear all the con-ver-sa-tions you would find that near-ly all of them are a-bout "shop" of some sort or an-oth-er—gen-er-al pol-i-tics, par-tic-u-lar Bills, or curr-ent con-tro-vers-ies, part-y pros-pects, Par-lia-men-tary per-son-al-i-ties and plans. There may be here and there a group which is wick-ed-ly dis-cuss-ing the things of ord-in-ar-y life; but ev-er-y few min-utes they will be int-err-upt-ed by some eag-er Mem-ber who wish-es them to back an a-mend-ment, sign a re-so-lu-tion, or join a Comm-itt-ee. Here all the best cons-pir-a-cies and "move-ments" be-gin. Here the shy, new Mem-ber can meet and talk with the might-y Min-ist-er, list-en to his tales and mark his wise ad-vice. Here, on friend-ly terms, meet the Whips, not so a-larm-ing, and their flock, not so cowed. Here, at times, ev-en Min-ist-ers con-fer to-ge-th-er.

Here a mill-ion se-crets are re-veal-ed with-out fear; for it is an un-writ-ten but ven-er-a-ble tra-di-tion that no-thing heard in the Smo-king Room

shall be re-peat-ed out-side. Here, aft-er a hot de-bate, you might see those who have been bitt-er-ly (and a-bu-sive-ly) di-vi-ded re-new-ing, or for-get-ting, the ar-gu-ments with good hum-our o-ver a (small) gin. Here you may see the Prime Min-ist-er him-self in gen-i-al talk with those who have just opp-os-ed a vote of con-fi-dence in his Gov-ern-ment. Here, in short, you have the queer but prec-ious spir-it of the Brit-ish Par-lia-ment, which must not be de-stroy-ed. We diff-er from one an-oth-er, we may dis-like one an-oth-er; but still we have a fell-ow-feel-ing, be-cause we are all (we know not why) en-gag-ed in the same diff-i-cult bus-i-ness, the gov-ern-ment and bett-er-ment of man; and we have seen en-ough of it to re-cog-nize that aft-er all the oth-er fell-ow may be right.

All these things that I have told you a-bout, chil-dren, have come in-to be-ing aft-er hun-dreds of years of thought and tri-al in these small isl-ands. The chief point, as I told you, is to sett-le things by talk-ing and not by fight-ing or kill-ing. We must not ex-pect to get all oth-er coun-tries to do the same at once. But we are try-ing. And we shall succ-eed.

A. P. H.

"A carter who was bathing his bull had a novel experience when he was struck by the crocodile and was thrown out on to the bank of the river.

The man was bathing the bull when suddenly the animal became restless, having been seized by the crocodile."

Ceylon paper.

Emotional animals, bulls.



## At the Play

### "THE SIMPLETON OF THE UNEXPECTED ISLES" (ARTS)

CERTAINLY an unexpected choice. It is ten years since this Shavian curio entered the shop-window at Malvern. In revival it remains a minor prophecy—a fable, farcical-allegorical-poetical, in which SHAW appears to be repeating himself, reshuffling old ideas and old jests, filling time while he waits for an inspiration which here is slow to gleam. He was much happier with the Book of Genesis and the Garden of Eden than he is with his own Book of Revelation and an eminently Shavian view of Judgment Day. With a printed text before one the allegory may be crystalline: it is hardly so in performance.

There has been an unlucky eugenic experiment on the Unexpected Isles somewhere in the far waters of the Pacific. *Pra* and *Prola*, local priest and priestess, unite polygamously with a group of white mediocrities in an attempt to found a super-race. It is useless. The children of East and West grow into a posturing quartet devoid of any moral conscience; and the Simpleton, a shy curate whose arrival stirs parental hopes, cannot further the experiment. Capriciously, SHAW rushes on to Judgment Day—no less—and to the advent of an *Angel* (Mr. BILL SHINE), a genial if harassed envoy in the appropriate robe and wings. It seems that there are to

be no vials of wrath, no apocalyptic voices and thunders and lightnings—merely a heavenly staff-officer to explain that those who are valued and found wanting, those who have no use or purpose, will fade presently into thin air: they are to be extinguished for ever. In brief, euthanasia for the drones, but for those who survive the judgment an eternity of surprise and wonder. Mr. SHAW is vague about the method of valuation. We gather that usefulness and adaptability are two of the major virtues. But what are the others?

On the Unexpected Isles *Prola* and

*Pra*—who have an infinite capacity for greeting the unseen with a cheer—will contemplate the blissful æons apparently unaccompanied. The four children, who belie their names—*Love*, *Heroism*, *Empire*, *Pride*—vanish immediately: their white parents, we know, can have little staying power, and the one person for whom we feel regret is the Simpleton, the *Rev. Phosphor Hammingtap*. He begins farcically as a curate whose wits—so he says—were dulled by a nitrogenous



AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR DROPS IN.

<i>Pra</i> (the Priest) . . . . .	MR. MARK DIGNAM
<i>An Angel</i> . . . . .	MR. BILL SHINE
<i>The Simpleton</i> . . . . .	MR. PETER JONES
<i>Prola</i> (the Priestess) . . . . .	MISS CICELY PAGET-BOWMAN

diet in childhood. (Later the unfortunate young man was kidnapped by pirates at Weston-super-Mare.) This is G. B. S. at his most playful. It is a surprise when the Simpleton ends on a note of gentle sincerity in the evening's most appealing speech. Mr. PETER JONES, coaxing the part along through a performance agreeably unforced, shows again that he is a young actor to be considered.

Whatever we think of the play's ill-fitting mosaic of allegory, sermon, and intellectual farce, it is undeniably gallant of the Arts to present it. Wisely, the company—under Miss

JUDITH FURSE's direction—refuses to be portentous. The calm authority of Mr. MARK DIGNAM (*Pra*) and Miss CICELY PAGET-BOWMAN (*Prola*) is always valuable, and Mr. SHINE pays an angel's visit, short and bright. Miss ANNA BURDEN has a disheartening task with a Shavian marionette, the young woman whose advice on all occasions is "Let life come to you." J. C. T.

### "GAY ROSALINDA" (PALACE)

A grim enough title; but the operetta it conceals is *Die Fledermaus* (in the Reinhardt-Korngold arrangement). Here is the honeyed surge of Strauss with Mr. RICHARD TAUBER in joyous and athletic control of the orchestra, and on the stage a company fired by his zest. The first performance—first waltz, if you prefer—lasted for nearly three hours and a half. It speaks much for score, rendering, and production (by Miss LEONTINE SAGAN) that we barely noticed the passage of time until the last thirty minutes or so and the lagging humours of the gaol. Even Mr. JAY LAURIER's highly professional fooling can do little there.

The libretto is of course a problem. At least it can be said of the version by AUSTIN MELFORD and RUDOLF BERNAUER that it does not blunder into the way of the music and clog the evening with irrelevant clowning. The framework is blithely nonsensical. "Have I"—demands *Eisenstein* at one point—"Have I to get special permission to visit myself and thrash myself within

an inch of my life?" If Strauss had had the fortune of a librettist with Gilbert's wit, there would have been a combination and a play indeed. Still, the music is the thing: we are afloat on the full tide of the Blue Danube. Several of the singers hold the spirit of Strauss, more especially Miss RUTH NAYLOR (*Rosalinda*), who can sustain the Czardas, and Miss IRENE AMBRUS, the Adele. Mr. CYRIL RITCHARD would not boast of his singing voice, but his *Gabriel Eisenstein* has the proper champagne quality for an evening with beaded bubbles winking at the brim.

J. C. T.



## The Memoirs of Mipsie

By Blanche Addle of Eigg.

### V—Coming Out

WHAT an auspicious event this was in the good old days, and how different from the present time, when a girl's figure scarcely changes with her début and young people seem old before their teens! "Do you mind awfully if I cut Lord's this afternoon, grandpapa?" my grandson said to Addle just before the war at the Eton and Harrow. "There's a new film I want to see." I was somewhat shocked, I must confess, but Addle said nothing. Indeed, he is inclined to be taciturn during a cricket match, I have noticed, and often his only remark during a whole day is "Wait till the end of the over, dear." (I suppose he thinks, in his old-world courteous way, that the players would have to stop their game if I get up from my seat. He is always so considerate.) I am very fond of watching cricket myself, when with a cushion and a congenial companion one can spend the pleasantest afternoon, chatting of times past and present.

To return to girls' figures in the eighties, what miracles of elegance and womanliness they were! The tiny waist, the soft curves above and below, the smart bustle behind. I must admit, though, that the right effect was not achieved without trouble and sometimes tears. Gone were the days my mother knew, when she used to lie on the floor while an exceptionally strong footman (blindfolded of course) used to place one foot in the small of her back and lace her up. But a figure was still sufficiently important in 1889 for Elsie Rye (Lord Peckham's elder daughter) on the eve of her coming-out ball, to get her young sister to hammer in a croquet hoop round her waist while she lay on the lawn. Unfortunately the sister was then called in to bed and poor Elsie lay the whole night pinned to the damp grass and had pneumonia next morning. Another friend, Lady Mary Linsey-Wolsey, who had the misfortune to be very flat-chested, bethought her of wearing an air cushion inside her dress; but in the crush of a reception she unwisely mounted a chair—someone's hat-pin punctured the air cushion, and the whole crowd looked on in horror while her corsage collapsed with a long whine.

Another trial was hair. Fashion demanded a hair style which needed

great luxuriance of woman's glory, and although of course we Coots all had beautiful hair, others were not so blessed, and were forced to wear false switches or coils pinned on. (I hope my male readers will not be shocked to hear of this deception!) My cousin Clara Twynge was very unlucky in the management of hers. They kept slipping off, once into the offertory plate, and once into a jug of fruit-cup at a ball, which added somewhat to her natural shyness. Indeed, between that and the fact that she was distinctly plain (I do not know why, for she was a close cousin of ours) she was scarcely ever asked for a dance, and some unkind girls dubbed her "Cloak-room Clara" because she used to spend almost every evening in that sad spot. Eventually Mipsie heard of this, and with her usual warm-hearted sympathy soon put things to rights. At the next ball, when Clara entered the ball-room, all eyes were drawn to a card attached to her bustle: "Still waters run deep." That evening she was besieged with partners and received three offers of marriage, all of which, in her shyness, she accepted, which was fortunate as two of the suitors threw her over next morning.

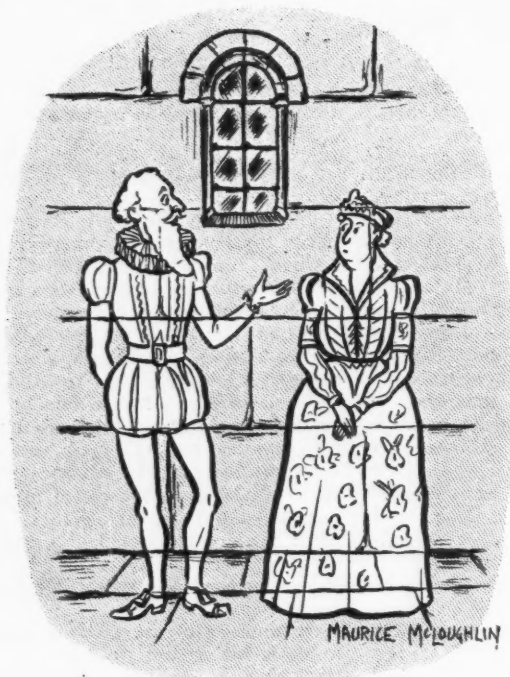
Even in that age of beautiful women Mipsie's entrance into Society created something of a sensation. "*Qui est cette demoiselle là ?*" asked the French Ambassador, a great connoisseur of beauty. When informed he said simply "*Tiens!*" and continued to look at Mipsie. Even his Gallic eloquence was silenced by such loveliness, it seems. The same evening H.R.H. the Prince of Wales—afterwards King Edward VII—was evidently much struck with her. She happened, in the supper room, to drop her fan almost at his feet. In a flash he had picked it up and handed it to her. A few minutes later she tripped on the staircase (she trips very easily, I have often noticed) and his was the hand that came to her rescue. "You are unfortunate this evening, Lady Millicent," the Prince said gravely, while Mipsie blushed vividly at the compliment implied. A royal memory for faces is well known of course, but

Beauty in Distress had evidently made an indelible impression on her future Sovereign.

But, indeed, Mipsie was always the pet of royalty. Her flashing wit and brilliant repartee often saved some difficult situation and turned a frown from a royal brow. I remember one party at the Royal Yacht Squadron garden during Cowes Week, when the somewhat austere King Crustatian of Iceland was the guest of honour. A sudden thunder shower had turned all the milk sour and H.M. was disposed to be annoyed, when: "There shouldn't be any shortage of milk at Cowes," said Mipsie audaciously. The royal displeasure suddenly melted into a smile, while everyone blessed Mipsie for the quick wit that relieved the tension.

On another occasion she was able to do great service to her country by saving an Eastern potentate from an embarrassing episode. During a house-party at the Duc de Tire-Bouchon's lovely château for the Chantilly races, the vastly rich Great Curd of Bokhara had ordered a beautiful butterfly brooch to be carried out in rubies, amethysts and emeralds, the Duc's racing colours, as a gift for the Duchesse. This lovely jewel was to be placed, as a charming whimsy, in a naturalistic manner amongst the flowers at dinner. But the jeweller had made a mistake and used sapphires instead of amethysts. There was a nervous pause while everyone looked at the butterfly and wondered what was wrong, for the Curd's face was like thunder. Then Mipsie, suddenly realizing the situation, took the brooch and swept him a deep curtesy. "I am honoured, your Highness," she said, "both by the gift and by your gracious memory of our armorial colours." It was a brave, splendid lie (for the Briskett colours are red and silver), told so as to save a foreign Power from embarrassment. Relations were distinctly strained between our two countries at the time, so who knows what political strife, or worse, may have been averted by her noble action? But that is not the only time my dear sister, by her tact and brilliance, has helped her country, I am proud to say. At one time she was known as "The Foreign Office Bag," so many statesmen and State secrets did she hold in the palm of her lovely hand. M. D.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"Sometimes, at night, I still fancy I can hear the sound of Home Guard manoeuvres in the grounds."

### Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### Ernest Dowson

AN American student, who has been assisted in his investigations by the Faculty Research Committee of the University of Pennsylvania, Mr. MARK LONGAKER has produced a biography of *Ernest Dowson* (HUMPHREY MILFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 24/-) based not only on everything written by and about Dowson, but also on personal interviews with Dowson's surviving friends and relations. Born in 1867 of parents both of whom committed suicide, Dowson inherited an aversion from life which was already evident in his late teens. "Nature and humanity are in the mass abhorrent," he wrote as an undergraduate at Oxford, which he left after five terms, realizing that his absorption in Baudelaire, Webster, Poe and Swinburne was not helping him towards a degree. During his middle twenties in London he wrote his best poems, the most famous of which, "Cynara," expressed his longing for ideal love, and his essential, if not literal, fidelity to the girl who embodied this ideal for him. "Cynara" was the daughter of a Pole who kept a restaurant in Soho. Her real name was Adelaide, she was only twelve when Dowson fell in love with her, and though he was greatly distressed when some years later she married a waiter, he probably regarded her rather as a symbol of unattainable felicity than as a woman with whom he could have found happiness in the limiting circumstances of ordinary life. Like Verlaine, of whom he saw a good deal in Paris, he seems to have felt that the surest way to safeguard his ideal was to make no attempt to realize it.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in this book is the account of how Horace Annesley Vachell tried to lift Dowson out of the gutter with the assistance of Gertrude Atherton. It was at Pont-Aven in Brittany. Dowson, not yet thirty, was toothless and almost destitute, and it occurred to Vachell, an admirer of his poetry, that an accomplished woman of the world, who was also a successful novelist, might help him to "pull up and become a brilliant figure in London." Mrs. Atherton did her best, but being herself a brilliant figure in London could not remain indefinitely in Pont-Aven, and Dowson lapsed back into his squalor and his dreams. Dowson's unstable but gentle and sincere nature, his unhappy but not very eventful life, and his delicate poetic gift required a lighter memorial than Mr. LONGAKER's mausoleum, out of which, however, some future biographer will be able to quarry the material for a living portrait.

H. K.

### Polish Testament

One cannot imagine the English rank and file deeply stirred if the Huns had murdered our professors, deported "Bacchus and Ariadne," and carried off the brazen head of our statue of Purcell—supposing we had had one—to be melted down for munitions. The Poles felt differently; and that is probably why Goering's hand went to his revolver when he heard the word "culture." Poland's was a national manifestation. *The Nazi Kultur in Poland*, published for the Polish Ministry of Information by H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE (5/-), is the last document the lawful government received from its hunted scholars before the Warsaw rising. "If one or two [of these scholars] are still living, that is the sum." The book—two hundred thousand smuggled words—is precise and restrained. It relates what the churches, schools, universities, libraries and picture galleries, music, the Press, the theatre, broadcasting and films meant, historically, to Poland—and what the Nazis made of them. Poland had few quislings; but everywhere there was the *Volksdeutsch*—that active germ of premeditated conquest which great neighbours keep, in their own kind of culture, for small ones. Atrocities need no stressing. The treatment of Poland is an atrocity, and her martyrdom—as Mr. MASEFIELD says in his preface—the longest and the most appalling of all.

H. P. E.

### Holiday Mood

The anonymous author who, under the pseudonym of "TACKLINE" and the title of *Holiday Sailor* (HOLLIS AND CARTER, 7/6), chronicles his experiences as a hostilities man in the Senior Service, does so in a spirit of irresponsible lightheartedness which makes his title for once peculiarly appropriate. Early rising, the pangs of sea-sickness, Divisions and Captain's Rounds, peeling potatoes (under the supervision of a Chief Wren), scouring decks and scrubbing out offices—all seem to come alike and never seriously amiss to this most cheerful and contented of temporary "matloes"; indeed, "I can honestly say," is his comment on one of his multifarious duties, "I minded this less than the majority." Humour, goodfellowship, and a due sense of perspective brought him successfully through much that otherwise could not fail to be irksome and galling. The result is a refreshing absence of "moans" over such things as lack of personal privacy and contrasts with lost comfort and vanished grandeur, in one of the happiest accounts of a recruit's experience the war has so far brought forth. "I had found," says "TACKLINE" on leaving his first ship, "a warmth, a genuineness, a friendliness, a courtesy that I knew I should be lucky indeed if I

ever encountered in life again"; to which it might be added that he, for his part, appears to have triumphantly vindicated his claim to the sobriquet of "Smiler." C. F. S.

### Sung of Sung Island

Mr. ROBERT STANDISH is far more interested in the merry soul of China than in her suffering body, though he maintains that the one is to a certain extent a riposte to the other. *The Small General* (DAVIES, 8/6) is, for all its air of fantasy, a novel of character. Its hero enters as the nine-year-old custodian of three thousand ducklings, escorting them in a sampan to and from their oozy feeding-grounds in Lake Ta Hu. But the duckling-tender is important because he is the heir of rich *Sung*, who holds the secret of pasturing an unprecedented number of silkworms on one little island. The secret involves the family in commercial intrigues, not only with other native magnates but with Japanese agents of penetration; and around the genial chicanery of the Chinese, the deeper machinations of the Japs, and the exploitation, by both, of certain patriotic brigands, revolves the drollest and prettiest tale of roguery that ever bore a useful moral. Here are epicurean landowners, submissive wives, and young people who gracefully revert, after suitable deviations, to the ancestral pattern. A book of outstanding charm, and an agreeable antidote to the more heavy-handed brand of Sino-British and Sino-American fiction. H. P. E.

### David Eder

David Eder was a remarkable man. A militant socialist in his youth, he was wounded in the famous "Bloody Sunday" riot in Trafalgar Square. In later life he took a leading part in the Zionist Movement, and he was the first and for some time the only practising Freudian psychoanalyst in London. In an address which he delivered not long before his death he said, "We are born mad, acquire morality and become stupid and unhappy. Then we die." So sincere a man deserved a different kind of memorial from the tributes assembled by Mr. J. B. HOBMAN in *David Eder: Memoirs of a Modern Pioneer* (GOLLANCZ, 8/6). There is, of course, much of interest in the accounts of his various activities by friends and fellow-workers. But the drone of eulogy sounds on unbroken, from the Foreword by Freud, in which he speaks of Eder's "simplicity, integrity and goodness," to the last sentence of the last contribution, which characterizes Eder's marriage as a "perfect companionship in which both felt and thought alike." It is true that Dr. Edward Glover, who celebrates Eder as a psychoanalyst, is faithful to the Freudian view that infants come into the world breathing lust and murder. "No doubt," he allows, "the infant Eder was all these things... egocentric, cantankerous, impatient, domineering, selfish, envious and mean." This concession made, he falls into line with the rest, describing Eder as courageous and philanthropic, unassuming and unambitious, buoyant and youthful in mind, and unusually happy in his married life. The frontispiece is an excellent photograph of Dr. Eder. He looks shrewd, resolute and disillusioned, but not unkindly, and would no doubt have realized that no one contributing to a volume like this could be expected to aim at verisimilitude while all the others were luxuriating in unqualified laudation. H. K.

### Grave and Gay

In *Turning Point—1943* (HUTCHINSON, 12/6) Lieut.-Commander TREVOR BLORE, R.N.V.R., who describes

himself as journalist turned naval officer for the duration, gives us three great pictures and (in the manner of many Italian masters) bedecks them with a number of smaller, more personal ones. The result makes interesting and easy reading. Doubtless we shall be given many other accounts of the three outstanding events of 1943, "truly a great vintage year for the Royal Navy"—the complete domination of the Mediterranean, the shattering of two major U-boat offensives, and the actions that crippled the *Tirpitz* and destroyed the *Scharnhorst*—but historians end to miss out the little stories that enliven and illuminate. These the author supplies in plenty, but there is much hard grim fact in the book as well, and once again we may be grateful to a born journalist for suffering danger and discomfort for our information. B. E. B.

### Man and the Machine

Some time after the close of World War No. 1 Mr. GARET GARRETT brought out a little book called *Ouroboros*, dealing with what he termed the Mechanical Extension of Mankind. Now he has written what is practically an enlarged version, containing all the substance of the first book together with a good deal more. *A Time is Born* (BLACKWELL, 7/6) provides interesting but somewhat disturbing food for thought. In it, as Miss Dorothy Sayers explains in a short introduction, the author points out that Man, confronted by the fruits of his own invention, finds himself in the position of the sorcerer's apprentice who succeeded in raising a powerful spirit which he was unable to control. We had never properly examined the nature of the monster we had called into being. All these new engines of ours—these "labour-saving" inventions—had not really availed to save labour: they have become ruthless machines that demand more and more service, for it seems they can only function with a continually expanding rate of production. Mr. GARRETT likens international trade to a great wheel, running faster and faster. Will the wheel crash—or can we still find some way of controlling its mad career? L. W.



"There was an extraordinary thing on the wireless last night."





*"On the contrary, I maintain that it's you whose path is going to be crossed by a tall dark man."*

## Turning Out

**I** SUGGEST that this afternoon we should be absolutely ruthless about the photographs."

"All right. Let's be absolutely ruthless about the photographs."

"There are hundreds, you know, thousands."

"We must throw them away in ruthless stacks."

"Who is this?"

"Who is it? It's awfully like someone."

"It's awfully like someone; it quite gives one a jump."

"But who is it awfully like?"

"Do you know, I think it's very, very Astley-Remnant?"

"Oh, he must be an Astley-Remnant! One of the old ones."

"He must be one of the old ones. It's dated 1843."

"It's rather a clever face."

"But rather self-indulgent."

"He must be an Astley-Remnant."

"Would one of them like to have it?"

"If it's their grandfather they'd probably treasure it."

"If it's their grandfather they've probably got it."

"Shall we put it in a drawer and then write and ask the Astley-Remnants if they'd like a photograph

that might possibly be their grandfather if they haven't got it already?"

"Of course, he may not be an Astley-Remnant."

"Shall we anyhow—put it in a drawer?"

"This is rather interesting, isn't it."

"It's just a view."

"But rather an interesting sort of good view. I wonder what the house is."

"It's just a square house."

"But someone must have lived in it."

"I rather like those trees."

"So do I. I think they're lovely trees. So big."

"Would anyone like a photograph of a square house and lovely big trees and an interesting view?"

"Doubtful heap."

"There seem to be endless ones of this child. From every possible angle. Who can it be?"

"Rather flat . . ."

"Dutch-looking . . ."

"Sulky . . ."

"Fifth-Columnist . . ."

"It's you!"

"Oh, yes . . . I'd better keep them; they might make the children laugh."

"There is no doubt but they will."

"Now here is a man who looks exactly like King Edward the Seventh, but isn't."

"Do you think that was why it was kept—because it was so like King Edward the Seventh and yet wasn't?"

"Would it be sufficient reason for keeping it now?"

"Doubtful heap."

"Oh, dear! . . . Oh, dear, oh, dear. This is terribly upsetting. You know who that is, don't you?"

"Yes. Fancy!"

"And you think of all that happened—"

"Yes."

"She looks so unfledged, so innocent—"

"Poor Charles."

"I am quite overcome with a terrible feeling of Nemesis."

"Let's get on to these of foreign parts."

"This must be somewhere very, very hot."

"Boiling."

"With palm trees—"

"And savage types."

"Some museum or other may collect photographs of savage types. Some ethnologist?"

"Put in a possible heap for ethnologists."

"Just a picture postcard of a tiny little kitten in a basket."

"Oh, good! We really can be ruthless about that."

"Unless I write to the hotel on it and ask if they have a room on Wednesday."

"All right. It is rather appealing."

"The Doubtful heap is on the point of collapse."

"And how many in the Discarded heap?"

"Two."

"One of them I now recognize as old General Fouracre."

"Is it? . . . Yes, it is. How nice he was! Very kind, really."

"Very, very kind."

"So—sort of—straightforward."

"Tremendously straightforward."

"He used to wear a bow tie."

"Yes, he did."

"Do we really want to discard General Fouracre?"

"Shall we anyhow—just for the time being—put him in a drawer?"

o o

"— March 9, at the — Nursing Home —, to Margaret, wife of —, 8 twins (a son and a daughter)."—Birth announcement  
Only keeping two?

## Sunday Morning

"I THINK you'd better speak to him, darling," said my wife.

"He's a funny man," said Mrs. Childs. "If 'e won't leave it, 'e won't leave it."

"The thing is, Mrs. Childs," I said, in my brisk masculine way, "that my wife is entitled to an extra pint of milk a day. She has all the necessary certificates."

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Childs. Her skirt was being violently agitated from behind, and she added mildly, "Stop it, Violet—Mummy's talkin'."

"You did tell him," said my wife, "that I was going to live here?"

"Oh, yes. And told 'im you'd got the tickets."

"Tickets?"

"The proper tickets, for extra, like. But he's such a funny man."

"I think you'd better speak to him, darling," said my wife.

"Rine, rine, gow awaii, cam agine on washing-daii," said Violet, with such marked rhythm that Mrs. Childs seized herself anxiously by the waist and staggered back a step. "I'm coming, dear," she said.

"Arry ap then," said the invisible child, and began to weep piercingly.

I raised my voice. "I'll speak to him," I yelled.

"Perhaps," boomed my wife, "you would let us know when he is on his way back?"

Mrs. Childs, who is not equipped with an adjustable volume-control, formed her lips into inaudible words of assent and was whipped from the room. The noise of simulated distress stopped at once and was replaced by the familiar counting exercise, executed breathily through our keyhole . . .

"Wan, thray, fower, fa-ive, taou, thray, sex, ight . . ."

"I'm sorry, darling," said my wife. She knows that asserting myself with tradesmen is not my forte.

"I'll speak to him," I said grimly—"you shall have your extra pint, don't worry."

"Twenty-tan, twenty-twelve . . ." breathed the extramural student.

"Quiet!" I said loudly.

The counting stopped. There was a moment's beautiful silence, followed by a wail which passed through the ear-drums like a harpoon.

"Darling, you mustn't!" said my wife.

"I don't know how you stick it."

She sighed as we heard the scurry of maternal footsteps and the accents of maternal consolation.

"It means saucepan-lids now."

"It means what?"

"Saucepan-lids—to play with. Listen."

A steady crashing, as of cymbals, had begun in the kitchen. Crash! Crash! Crash! Crash! There was singing with it . . . "Rine, rine, gow awaii . . ."

"How long does this go on?"

"It finishes up with throwing them about, usually at the cat."

"I see," I said. "Well . . ." I got up.

"Where are you going?"

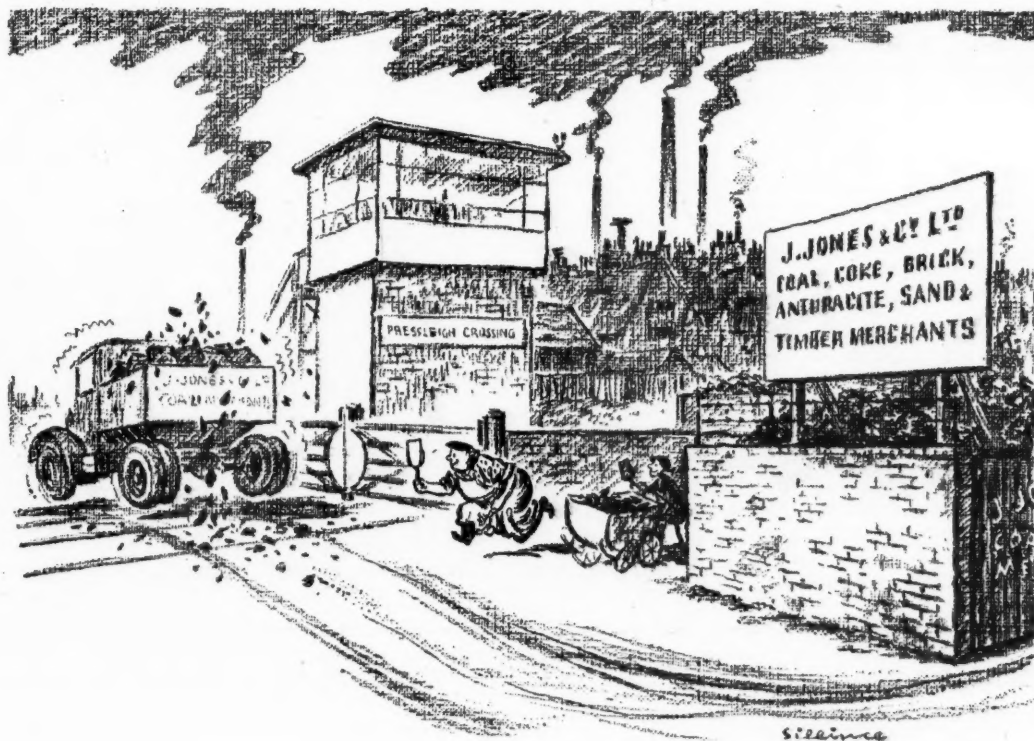
"I—er—thought perhaps . . . how long is the milkman likely to be before he comes back this way?"

"Not long. Why? Mrs. C. is going to tell us when he heaves in sight. Look, here is all the evidence."

She laid ration books, medical certificates, Food Office letters and other miscellaneous documents in the centre of the table.

"All right," I said—and then, coming out with it—"I'm going up to put my uniform on."

"Darling, whatever for? I thought



you always said what a relief it was to get into old clothes on a Sunday."

"These are so old," I said.

"I don't expect," she said, "that the milkman will be wearing faultless morning dress."

"That's not the point," I said.

"I would never have believed it!"

"Believed what?"

"Believed that you had more faith in your silly old uniform than in your own strength of character!"

"Well, I don't know," I said—"but if he's such a funny man . . . and he may have been in the Army at some time . . ."

"Oh, go on, then, darling—but I must say, I think it's a bit weak, really I do."

A saucepan-lid flew out of the kitchen and struck me on the knee as I began to go upstairs.

I was still debating whether to wear any leather when I heard the preliminary warning from downstairs. "Is ear, mam. Is ear, mam. Is ear, mam. Is camming, mam. Is camming, mam. Is ear, mam. . ." *Crash! Crash! Crash! Crash!*

Doors opened and shut.

"Darling," called my wife.

I tried to see myself with a milkman's eye as I looked in the glass. I took up a small weapon from the dressing-table and came downstairs. I heard the jingle and clip of the milk-cart.

"Good luck, darling," said my wife.

"Don't worry," I said, taking up the small heap of official literature—"you shall have your just dues." It

was perhaps a little over-dramatic of me to kiss her, but I did.

There was a scuffle and a scream as I passed into the hall, and the kitchen door was stirring slightly, as if from conflicting pressures from the inside.

"Good morning," I said to the milkman as he emerged from the house opposite, leaving the gate open. He was a small, wizened, bandy-legged man with sharp and unshaven features.

"Don't lo! about—take them bottles into Number Thirty," he said. I saw then that he was addressing a young urchin who had been regarding me with respect from the other side of the cart.

I shuffled my pack of papers.

"I'm from Number Twenty-six," I said. "There seems to be some—"

"Giddap," said the man, and the horse, after giving me a glance of disgust, led the way to the next house. I fell in behind.

"I'm at the War Office all the week," I said, playing my second most powerful card. The man did not answer until he had returned from Number Thirty-two with a quantity of empty bottles.

"An' there's the same ruddy muddle at the War Office," he said, "as there is in the milk-trade."

"I can't agree there," I said.

"Nobody can accuse—"

"Giddap," he said. "After my nephew'd been discharged three months with a gastric stomach they wrote to 'is wife and said they couldn't release 'im because 'e was doing important work in India."

"Listen," I said. "You only left four pints at Number Twenty-six this morning."

"It says four pints in the ledger," said the man. He happened to be glancing at the "ledger" at the time. It was a tattered and smudged exercise-book, and he stabbed at an entry with a blackened nail.

I took the weapon from my trousers pocket. I had had enough. I was out of sight, now, of Number Twenty-six, but other curtains were being twitched back curiously.

"My wife is entitled to an extra pint," I said, allowing the pale morning sunlight to glint on the half-crown.

"Five it is, mate," said he, handing me a pint bottle and disarming me. "Giddap."

I heard the sounds of welcome before I started up the path of Number Twenty-six. "Is gottit, mam. Is gottit, mam." *Crash! Crash!*

My wife was at the door of our room to welcome her hero. I had decided to be casual about it. I held up the bottle with a little gay gesture and a smile which had a touch of modest recklessness about it. Then I stepped squarely on the small red railway-engine, trundled quietly along the passage to meet me.

Mrs. Childs went for the dust-pan while Violet counted me out. "Wan, thray, taou, fa-ive, fower . . ."

"You would have done better to wear your old flannels," said my wife, mopping me down in front of the fire. It was the only word of reproach she uttered.

J. B. B.



ACANTHUS.

"I have an idea Denis has been to Cairo before."

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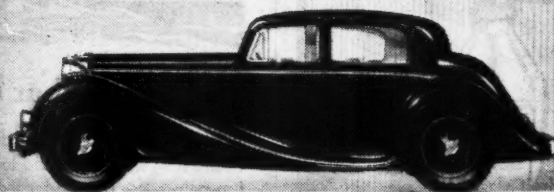
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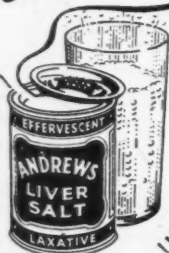


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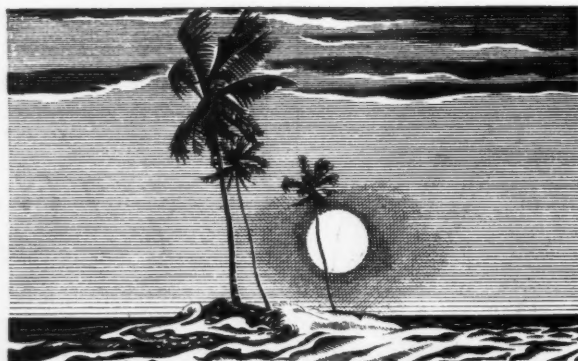
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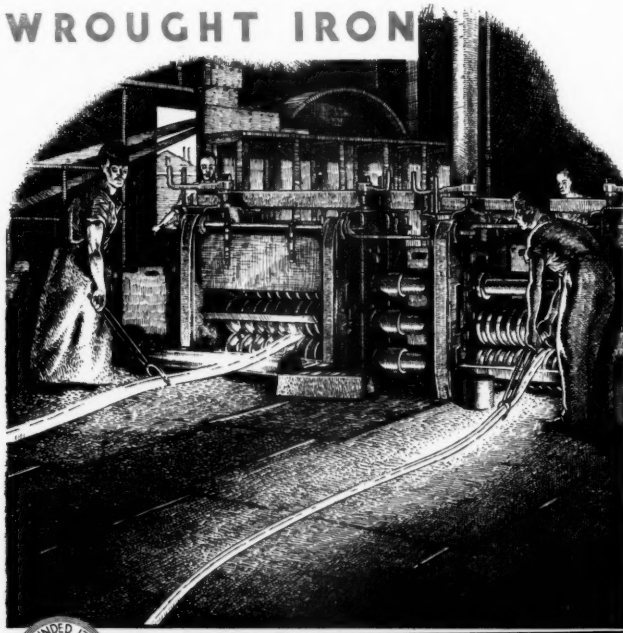
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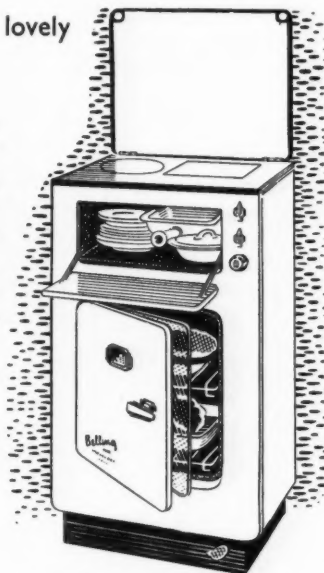
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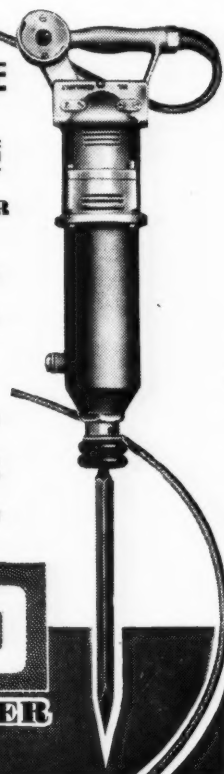
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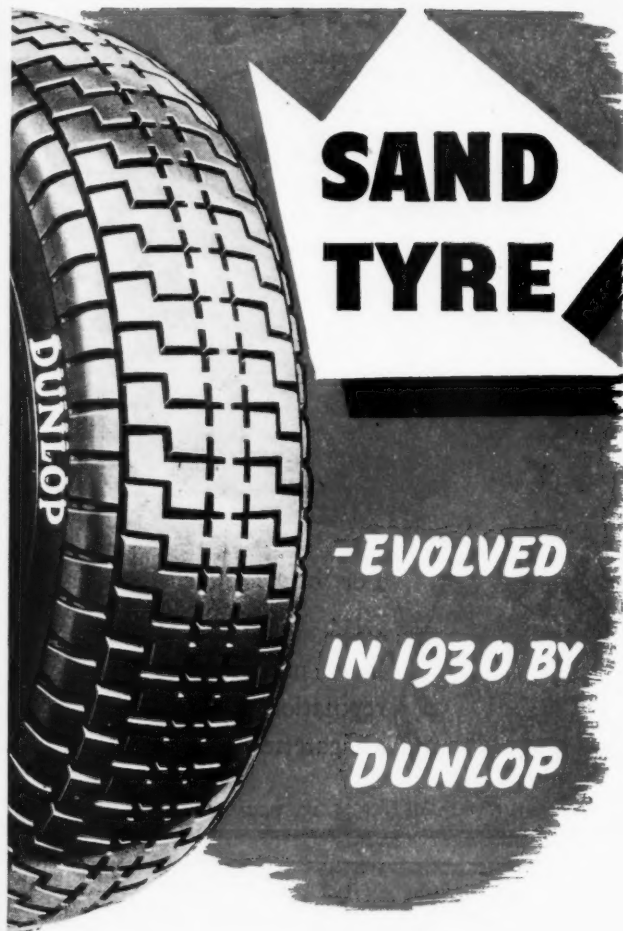


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